

SECOND EDITION

Towards Golgotha

*The Memoirs of Hagop Arsenian,
a Genocide Survivor*

Translated and Annotated by
Arda Arsenian Ekmekji

Foreword by
Raymond H. Kévorkian

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
Beirut

© 2011, 2015, HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS
Beirut, Lebanon

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior permission of the publisher.

www.haigazian.edu.lb | www.towardsgolgotha.com

ISBN 978-9953-585-13-4

Praise for *Towards Golgotha*

“Hagop Arsenian’s memoir chronicles his life and his traumatic experience on a death march, during the Armenian genocide, from his home in Ovajik , Ottoman Turkey in 1915 through the long ordeal of the march through Anatolia, into the Syrian desert, and ultimately to a new and prosperous life in Jerusalem by the 1930s. His granddaughter, the scholar Arda Arsenian Ekmekji, has done a superb translation and has also made a careful, layered, scholarly edition with her introduction, notes, maps, and photographs. Arsenian’s memoir is a classic modern Armenian story of survival against odds, perseverance, and rebirth.”

-Peter Balakian

“There are many memoirs of the terrible tribulations of the Armenian Genocide. Hagop Arsenian’s is an especially precious one. It was written fresh after the events with great lucidity and it takes us straight into the heart of the events as seen by a man who never lost his humanity, despite the terrible things he was witness to.”

-Thomas de Waal

“Reading Hagop Arsenian’s memoir is far more engaging than a visit to a museum. It is a visit of a century old memory crafted into a social biography, where the personal itinerary is inextricably and consistently tied to the trials of the Armenian people.”

-Tarek Mitri

Former Lebanese Minister of Culture

“It is a remarkable account, candid, totally unaffected, and suffused with hope even at the most terrible points of that terrible journey”.

-Tarif Khalidi, Historian

“Not only a passionate, human and honest autobiography, but also extremely disturbing by what it recounts of the atrocities we knew were committed but did not really know how inhuman the Turks were.”

*-Nazek Saba Yared
Lebanese novelist*

Lest They Forget

*This book is dedicated to the Great Grand-Children of
Hagop Arsenian:*

Harutiun, Ardashes, and Vazken Kassakhian,

Karine and Arnaud Attamian,

Ivan and Natasha Carmi,

Karma Ekmekji,

Norig and Natalia Arsenian,

Adrienne and Leah Janz

and their children:

Romain-Garo, Matisse-Noubar, Ella-Louise, Carlos,
Isabella, Alejandro Vartan, Raï, Armen Everett and Yann.

Acknowledgements

This publication would not have been possible without the support of numerous individuals. I would like to thank Raymond H. Kévorkian for writing the Foreword of *Towards Golgotha*; Hilmar Kaiser for sharing unpublished research; Isgouhi Kassakhian, for copies of the manuscripts, pictures and charts of Hagop Arsenian and for her constructive remarks; Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Dr. Garabet Kassakhian, Dr. Antranig Dakessian, Sona Attamian, Nora Carmi and Karma Ekmekji for contributing their valuable comments; Ivan Carmi, Todd Bolen and Matt Probert for providing originals of photographs and maps; Dr. Shereen Khairallah and Katia Peltekian for the editing and proofreading of the text; Vera Gosdanian of Haigazian University's Derian Library for her relentless assistance; and last but not least, my husband Jacques, for his patience and continuous support from the initial launching until the final completion of this *via dolorosa*.

Contents

Preface to the Second Edition	xv
Foreword <i>by Raymond H. Kévorkian</i>	xvii
Preface to the First Edition	xxi
INTRODUCTION: Armenia Through the Ages	1
PROLOGUE: Nicomedia 2002	9
PART ONE: Autobiographical Notes, Deportation Memoirs and Reflections (1880-1919)	19
Arsenian's Foreword	21
<i>Chapter One:</i> Ovajik	25
<i>Chapter Two:</i> Adabazar	41
<i>Chapter Three:</i> Izmit	47
<i>Chapter Four:</i> Izmit-Konia	63
<i>Chapter Five:</i> Karaman	69
<i>Chapter Six:</i> Eregli	75
<i>Chapter Seven:</i> Bozanti-Tarsus	83
<i>Chapter Eight:</i> Mamura-Amanus-Islahiye	91
<i>Chapter Nine:</i> Katma-Akhterim	97
<i>Chapter Ten:</i> Bab	105
<i>Chapter Eleven:</i> Meskene	109
<i>Chapter Twelve:</i> Dipsi-Abu Harar	113
<i>Chapter Thirteen:</i> Meskene-Aleppo	123
<i>Chapter Fourteen:</i> Jerusalem	129

PART TWO: Diasporal Memoirs: Life in Palestine	
(1919-1940)	147
<i>Chapter Fifteen: Bethlehem</i>	149
<i>Chapter Sixteen: Gaza</i>	151
EPILOGUE: Deir Zor 2010	199
Hagop Arsenian's Timeline	203
Appendix I - Deportation Proclamation	211
Appendix II - Sharif Hussein's Edict	215
Select Bibliography	217
Index	227

MAPS

Map 1 <i>Historical Armenia</i>	xxvi
Map 2 <i>Constantinople 1922</i>	34
Map 3 <i>Hagop Arsenian's Deportation Route</i>	62
Map 4 <i>Palestine 1922</i>	148

ILLUSTRATIONS

Hagop Arsenian's Portrait	20
Hagop Arsenian's Foreword	22-23
Hagop Arsenian's Manuscript First page	26
Vartanian School Certificate - Ovajik	31
Copy of Istanbul Pharmacy Diploma	40
Hagop Arsenian's Adabazar Accounts	44-45
Deportation from Izmit - Manuscript p. 36	58
List of Armenian Prisoners of War - Egypt 1918	142-143
List of Armenian Prisoners (Arsenian's list)	144-145
<i>Arev Newspaper</i> Armenian Mass in Gaza	163
Excerpts from <i>Arev Newspaper</i> - Cairo	177
<i>Arev Newspaper</i> Patriarch Torkom in Gaza	187

Contents - xiii

List of Armenian Clergy Officiating Mass in Gaza (Compiled by Arsenian)	197
List of Armenian Clergy Officiating Mass in Gaza (English Translation)	198

Pl. I	<i>Izmit (2002)</i>
Pl. II	<i>Adabazar & Ovajik (2002)</i>
Pl. III	<i>Arsenian's Pharmacy Diploma from Istanbul University</i>
Pl. IV	<i>Adabazar-Ovajik 1910-1913</i>
Pl. V	<i>Aleppo 1916</i>
Pl. VI	<i>Jerusalem 1916 - St. James Convent</i>
Pl. VII	<i>Church of the Holy Sepulchre – Jerusalem</i>
Pl. VIII	<i>Palestine 1917</i>
Pl. IX	<i>Army Officers - Damascus 1918</i>
Pl. X	<i>Palestine 1919</i>
Pl. XI	<i>Gaza & Egypt 1923-1939</i>
Pl. XII	<i>Arab Conferences and Protests 1929-1931</i>
Pl. XIII	<i>Lebanon 1935-1936</i>
Pl. XIV	<i>Jerusalem 1920-1940</i>
Pl. XV	<i>Jerusalem 1940</i>
Pl. XVI	<i>Jerusalem-Jordan 1956-1957</i>
Pl. XVII	<i>Jerusalem-Jordan 1959-1962</i>
Pl. XVIII	<i>Arsenians with Jordanian Minister of Health - 1960</i>
Pl. XIX	<i>Jerusalem 1963 - Last pictures of H. Arsenian</i>
Pl. XX	<i>Family Reunion - Beirut 1996</i>
Pl. XXI	<i>Deir Zor 2010 - The Euphrates and Habur Bridge</i>
Pl. XXII	<i>Deir Zor 2010 - Marqade</i>
Pl. XXIII	<i>Deir Zor 2010 - Holy Martyrs' Church</i>
Pl. XXIV	<i>Deir Zor 2010 - Genocide Museum</i>

Preface to the Second Edition

Four years have elapsed since the publication of *Towards Golgotha*. Since then, the Middle East has undergone a devastating transformation. What started as an Arab Spring heralding welcoming changes has turned into a horrendous inferno and civil wars. Aleppo, the first city to host the Armenian refugees in 1915, has become a war torn community with tens of thousands of Armenians fleeing to the neighboring countries.

This second edition also coincides with the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. A century since my grandfather Hagop Arsenian and his family boarded the ill-fated deportation train which transported them to exile and to an uncertain future. It would have been so appropriate to mark this centennial year with another pilgrimage to Deir Zor, as the postlude of the first edition had done. Alas, the Memorial Church and the Genocide Museum at Deir Zor have been destroyed, and the festering wound is open again for all the victims who never had a final burial ground, like my great-grandmother Mariam, buried somewhere in the plains of Meskene, Syria.

These past four years also mark the loss of the last two members of the Second Generation: My mother Sirarpi Krakirian and my aunt Ankiné. Sirarpi was the wife of Noubar, who was a child of three and walked along the death march; and Ankiné was the wife of Norair, who was only nine months old during the tragic events of the Genocide.

But the family has also been blessed with a fifth generation of three male offsprings: Rai, Armen and Yann. Thus continues the journey.

The back cover of this edition is adorned with the Forget-Me-Not flower, the official emblem of the 100th Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. The symbolism of this emblem is explained inside the back flap.

Simultaneously with the publication of the second edition, the typed version of the first part of the original handwritten Armenian manuscript of Hagop Arsenian has been uploaded at www.towardsgolgotha.com.

Beirut, September 2015

Foreword

Raymond H. Kévorkian¹

For the past few decades, memoirs have occupied the focal point of our attention. Numerous families have sought to discover their origins, the history of their ancestors and, in the process, have come up with impressive and precise genealogies.

In Armenian circles, and especially in the heart of the Diaspora, this phenomenon has become extremely powerful. However, not all families are fortunate to have a well-read ancestor who undertook the task of transcribing his own personal experiences and explained the reasons that led to the loss of his original fatherland. Such memoirs, often jotted down in student copy books and written several decades after the actual events had taken place, are primarily addressed to future generations. However, because they are written in Armenian and still in manuscript form, they are often inaccessible to these descendants. It is necessary, therefore, to have a multilingual person who can assume this task on behalf of the rest of the family members. It is precisely this mission that Arda Ekmekji, granddaughter of Hagop Arsenian, undertook the task of translating and annotating the memoirs of her grandfather, shortly after discovering their existence.

¹ Raymond H. Kévorkian, historian, teaches at the French Institute of Geopolitics (University of Paris VIII-Saint-Denis). Since 1987, he has served as Curator of the Armenian AGBU's Nubarian Library in Paris. Kévorkian is the author of numerous books on the modern and contemporary history of Armenia and Armenians, and especially of his recent encyclopedic work entitled *The Armenian Genocide, A Complete History*. (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2011).

This labor of re-appropriating family memory is undoubtedly a capital venture and a stabilizing factor for the new generations who are in the process of seeking their origins and determining their identities. They definitely owe it to their ancestor, but also to Arda Ekmekji, the “transmitter of this memory”.

Each work of this *genre* is endowed with a singularity that is due mainly to the narrator’s qualities of observation as well as to his level of grasping the significance of the events. The memoirs of Hagop Arsenian thus reflect not only a well-educated man but also a resourceful one, who, even in the most perilous situations, succeeds in keeping his head and finds the means of overcoming them. Undoubtedly, this pragmatism is mainly due to his experiences as a young man, growing up, supporting a prematurely widowed mother and meeting family needs, as well as to his student years in the Ottoman capital, at the same time juggling a professional career in pharmacy and a paid job in the paranoiac Abdul Hamid era noted for its constant harassment of the younger generations by his henchmen. (The author was detained for 35 days and deprived months of university attendance due to false and baseless accusations).

This work is also distinguished by the fact that these memoirs do not cover only the events related to the 1915 genocide but equally to the period between the two world wars in Gaza, Palestine, under the British Mandate, thus providing a major testimony on the condition of the integration of the Armenian refugees in Palestine and the tension eminent between Jews and Arabs.

The Memoirs start with the author’s childhood in Ovajik (Izmit region), in a humble family in which the mother occupies the central place. Hagop happily attends the village’s Armenian school where, for a short time afterwards, he

serves as a teacher. In August 1907, he receives his diploma in Pharmacy and until March 1914, runs a pharmacy in the neighboring city of Adabazar, where he also founds a family. When he settles in Izmit in the spring of 1914, life seems at its best for Hagop. Yet the following year all his achievements are ruined by the local authorities in the name of the war effort.

On July 26, 1915, he is deported with his wife, his mother and his two sons, but manages to pay his way by train to the gates of Cilicia. The rest of this “journey” is a series of daily trials which the Arsenian family braves day after day. Their convoy passes through stations such as Eregli, Bozanti (September-October), Adana-Osmaniye (early November), the camps of Katma-Akhterim, then Bab (early December) and finally Meskene, on the right bank of the Euphrates, thus evoking all these death camps where the Arsenians should have disappeared.

It is not clear how this family survives six months in the Meskene Camp until June 1916, but it is certain that they were a hair’s breadth from the final episode of the Young Turks’ plan, namely the closure of all camps and the concentration of all the deported refugees in Deir Zor, before their final liquidation in the summer and fall of 1916.

It is almost miraculous that Hagop Arsenian succeeds in July 25, 1916, in being posted as military pharmacist in Jerusalem where the units of the Ottoman IVth army were stationed. He arrives at this position precisely at the moment (August 3, 1916) when the Catholicos of Cilicia, Sahag Khabayan, is installed as Patriarch-Catholicos of Ottoman Armenians, (or of whoever remains of them), after the official suppression of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. Stationed at the former French Hospital, requisitioned by the Ottoman army, Hagop fraternizes with

numerous Armenians working in the medical corps under assumed Turkish names, thus betraying the great lack of physicians and pharmacists among the Turkish troops. It is thanks to this status that Hagop succeeds in saving his family (including his in-laws) and manages to have them all repatriated to Jerusalem. Here we have a good example of an exceptional situation of a whole family being spared from the common lot, thanks to army needs and probably to the goodwill of one superior.

From then onwards, the fate of the Arsenian family is closely linked to the St. James Convent of Jerusalem which shelters them as of August 1916 and provides them with a new lease on life. When the British directly threaten Jerusalem, the call to duty on November 6, 1917, separates Hagop once more from his family which remains in Jerusalem while he is sent to Damascus with his unit. By the end of September 1918, he becomes, together with numerous Ottoman officers and soldiers, a prisoner-of-war of the British, and stays for some time in the camps of Kantara, close to the Suez Canal. However, he already knows that he has escaped the fate of his fellow citizens. He rejoins his family in January 1919, after numerous months of internment.

Henceforth starts the Arsenian family's insertion into the Palestine scene, which constitutes for us one of the rare, first-rate testimonies of the tensions between the Jews and the Palestinians between the two World Wars. At the Gaza hospital, where he works for more than 20 years, Hagop enjoys an exceptional role of observer only to become once more a refugee in 1948 as a result of the Arab-Israeli war.

Raymond H. Kévorkian

Paris, December 2010

Preface to the First Edition

My grandfather (*Medz hayrig*), the pharmacist Hagop Arsenian (1880-1963), lived until the ripe old age of eighty three. Of an extremely inquisitive and adventurous nature, ten days before his death, he undertook a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem and in spite of an ailing foot, ventured to climb the hundred stairs leading to the Golgotha Chapel in order to inspect the reconstruction works initiated by the Armenian Church. On the way down, he slipped, and further complications resulting from his diabetic condition aggravated his situation, eventually leading to his death on September 30, 1963, in Jerusalem, far from his native Ovajik (ancient Nicomedia), in modern Turkey.

As a young girl of twelve, I vividly remember his funeral in the St. James Armenian Convent. Hundreds of people, Armenians and Arabs, accompanied the coffin of Jerusalem's oldest pharmacist to his final resting place in the small cemetery adjacent to the Calouste Gulbenkian Library in the Convent.¹ "Baron Arsenian" or "Abu Noubar" (father of Noubar), as he was called by the Arabs, was a well known figure in Jerusalem. Through the years, any Armenian visiting the Holy Land had to complete the pilgrimage with a stop at the Arsenian pharmacy, which, before 1948, was located on Mamilla Road,² and during the Jordanian era, was known as "The Jerusalem Grand Pharmacy" on Rashid Street outside

¹ After the 1967 war, the Armenian cemetery in the St. Savior (*Sourp Prgitch*) Church, which lay in No Man's Land between 1948-1967, was reused. My grandfather's remains were relocated in 1977 to rest near his dear wife Hrout there. (Pl. XIX)

² Arsenian and Harami Pharmacy on Mamilla Road.(Pl. XV)

the city wall, jointly run by my grandfather Hagop, and my father, Noubar Arsenian (1912-2003).³

As a child, my grandfather impressed me as an accomplished, happy and relaxed man, proud of his family and dedicated to them. Every summer, he would gather his grandchildren, the six elder ones,⁴ and take us on excursions. He loved the outdoors and enjoyed watching us play games like Monopoly and Scrabble. Anybody looking at the family scene would never have suspected that this man had had a single day's worry in his life. Endowed with an amazing sense of humor, he would recount endless anecdotes and instill in us a sense of duty and responsibility. To him I owe my introduction to the intricacies of the Armenian alphabet, language and grammar, the instruction of which he undertook more as a religious duty than as a labor of love. Sometimes, while watching me and calling me "Ardanoush", his hazel eyes would freeze, probably evoking painful memories of which nothing was betrayed nor ever relayed to us.

In July 1996, thirty three years after his death, an Arsenian family reunion took place in my home in Beirut on the occasion of my niece's, Natasha Carmi, graduation from the American University of Beirut (AUB). Present were my father Noubar from Jerusalem, (AUB, PhC. 1935), my mother Sirarpi Krakirian, my uncle Jirair Arsenian from Ottawa, (AUB, MD. 1947), his wife Elvira and my two sisters: Sona and her husband Edouard Attamian from Paris, and Nora and her husband George Carmi from Jerusalem (Pl. XX). It was during this brief visit that I first laid eyes on the manuscript written in my grandfather's handwriting.

³ In 1960, The Minister of Health of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Dr. Jamil Toutounji, honored Hagop Arsenian and Noubar Arsenian for 75 years of joint service in the field of pharmacy. (Pl. XVIII).

⁴ Pl. XVII

The manuscript of Hagop Arsenian is composed of two parts: an earlier one, compiled in 1919, describing his childhood, university education and eventual deportation from Turkey (1915), recounting the horrible day-to-day events of their exodus and their *via dolorosa* all the way to Jerusalem (1916). The second part describes the Arsenian family's post-genocide struggles and life in Palestine between 1919-1940. Although the details of this second part may be of little interest to the history reader, they underline valuable anthropological information about the first chapters and concerns of early Armenian Diaspora in Palestine under the British Mandate.

My grandfather had handed these documents to his daughter Arsine Kassakhian, who had preciousely kept them in her possession. Later, a copy was given to her brother in Canada, my Uncle Jirair, who shared it with us.

An attempt to read the beautifully inscribed document written in perfect Western Armenian proved to be quite an arduous task for me. On the other hand, my father, who was quite familiar with his own father's style and reading of illegible medical prescriptions, read it quite smoothly and without much difficulty. It was then that we had the brilliant idea of requesting my father to voice record the entire document on tape. My husband, Jacques, reproduced the entire manuscript in a magnified version, zooming it to 150%, thus making the reading much easier for the weak eyes of my 84 year-old father.

For two weeks in July 1996, my father undertook the meticulous task of reading the manuscript on six tapes. Sometimes, when the scenes became too violent to describe or when passages related to his own childhood were read, he himself, then a child of three, would pause, shed a few tears and continue the family's odyssey towards Golgotha.

After the death of my father in 2003, the transcribing of these memoirs became more significant and precious to me and thus I undertook the task of translating the whole manuscript into English. I felt that a journal so meticulously archived and chronicled deserved a larger audience than the families of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. If my grandfather had committed himself to the writing of these heart-rending events, if my father had patiently gone through their reading, then it was my duty now to relay these pages to the International Community and the world at large.

As previously mentioned, this book is entirely based on the autobiography of Hagop Arsenian, and covers the period from his birth in Ovajik in 1880 to 1940 Gaza (Palestine). The deportation and immediately ensuing period (1915 to 1920) seem to have been carefully chronicled with daily reports of events. On the other hand, the earlier and later periods, including his personal remarks and comments, must have been added at later stages and intermittently, since they often betray the bitterness and frustration of a man who had seen the concluding chapter of the story.

But since the Genocide memoirs and the testimony of the survivors' accounts⁵ are not mere narrations, but as Shirinian explains, ⁶ *“... they have a status and function in Armenian culture as well as in Armenian collective memory... for it is through other people's memories that the*

⁵ Haroutiun Isgahedian, *Vgayaran Haygagan Tseghaspanoutyan*, (Anthology of Testimonies of the Armenian Genocide), (Beirut: G. Nazarian Foundation, 2010); Verjine Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide and Historical Memory*, Translated from the Armenian by Tigran Tsulikian, (Yerevan: Gitutian Pub. House of the NAS RA, 2004).

⁶ Lorne Shirinian, “Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide as Cultural History”, in Richard G. Hovannisian(ed.) *Remembrance and Denial, The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998) 172; *Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide*, (UK: Taderon Press, 1999), 22.

*individual completes his own experience, which in the end attaches him to the community to which he or she belongs.*⁷

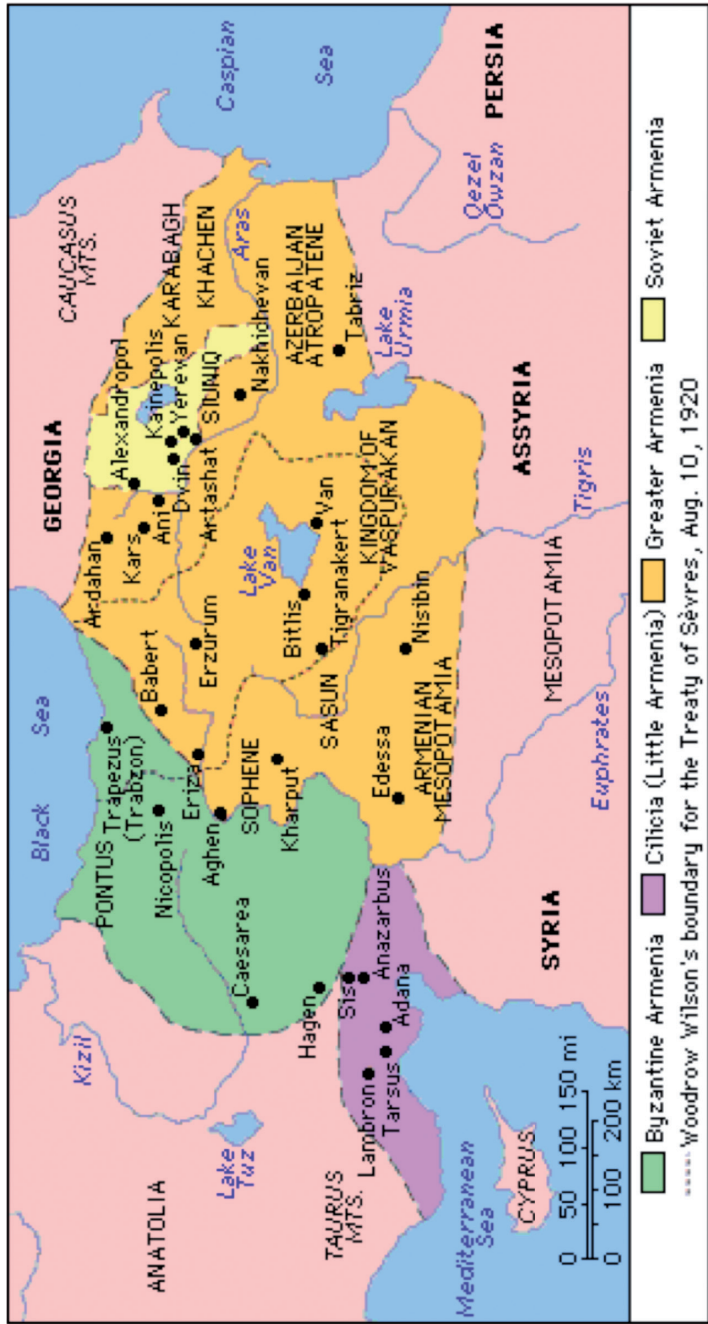
I therefore found it appropriate, or should I say imperative, to consult other survivors' memoirs and add background references, contextual notes and annotations in order to provide the relevant historical milieu and to underline the authenticity of the memoir by juxtaposing contemporary references. Hence, although the core substance of the book is a direct translation of Hagop Arsenian's memoirs, the title, the divisions into chapters with headings, the introduction, the quotations at the beginning of each chapter and all the annotations (except where mentioned), have been added by the translator.

Furthermore, the Prologue and the Epilogue of this work narrate the events related to the translator's own trip to Turkey in August 2002, namely to Nicomedia (Ovajak, Adabazar and Izmit), and the concluding pilgrimage to Deir Zor on April 24, 2010, commemorating the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Arda Arsenian Ekmekji
Beirut, April 24, 2011

⁷ André Bridoux, *Le Souvenir*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), 26.

Map 1 - Historical Armenia



This image comes from the 12th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica or earlier. The copyrights for that book have expired and this image is in the public domain.

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0b/Map_of_Historical_Armenia_Britannica.gif

INTRODUCTION

Armenia Through the Ages

The first reference to Armenia goes back to the Behistun Rock inscription of 520 B.C. currently found in modern Iran.¹ It refers to a country that lies in Eastern Anatolia (Modern Turkey) and the Central Caucasus surrounding the three lakes of Van, Sevan and Urmia (today respectively situated in Turkey, Armenia and Iran). Formerly, this area was referred to as the Land of Nairi and subsequently as the Kingdom of Urartu² by the Assyrians or the Land of Ararat³ in Biblical scriptures.

By 95 B.C., Armenia had emerged under the rule of King Tigran II⁴ as a strong kingdom, whose boundaries extended to the northern cities of the coast of Palestine. In 301 A.D., Armenia became the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion, two decades before Rome adopted Christianity through Constantine.⁵

To enable the Armenians to inscribe their Indo-European language in an exclusive system of writing, a monk by the

¹ Campbell R. Thompson, "The Rock of Behistun". *Wonders of the Past*. Edited by Sir J. A. Hammerton. Vol. II. (New York: Wise and Co., 1937), 760-767.

² Boris B. Piotrovsky, *The Ancient Civilization of Urartu*. (New York: Cowles Book Co., Inc., 1969).

³ Genesis 8:4, where Biblical Noah's Ark landed after the Flood.

⁴ Hakob Manandyan, *Tigranes II and Rome: A New Interpretation Based on Primary Sources*. Trans. George Bournoutian. (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2007).

⁵ David Marshall Lang, *Armenia: Cradle of Civilization*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970).

name of Mesrob Mashtots created, in 406, a unique alphabet⁶ of 36 letters. This eventually ushered a great Golden Age of translation and historiography.

In 451, the Armenians, led by Vartan Mamigonian⁷, (martyred and known as St. Vartan), fought the Zoroastrian Sassanid Empire in the first recorded war of faith in History.

Following the Seljuk invasion of Armenia in 1048, the Armenian population of Ani,⁸ capital of the Bagratouni Dynasty, migrated to the south-eastern boundaries of Anatolia to settle in “greener” pastures named Cilicia, known later in history as “Little Armenia.”⁹

In 1453, Constantinople (modern Istanbul) fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks, marking the end of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁰ The Ottoman Empire, which lasted some 600 years and incorporated Anatolia, Western Armenia and most of the Middle East, was a multinational entity made up of various ethnic groups including Christian Armenians, Greeks and Jews¹¹ who were subject to the “millet system”:

⁶ Avedis K. Sanjian, “The Armenian Alphabet”, Peter T. Daniels and William Bright (Eds.), *The Word's Writing Systems*. (New York, New York. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. 1996), 356-357.

⁷ George A. Bournoutian, *A History of the Armenian People. Vol. I: Pre-history to 1500 A.D.* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 1993), 78.

⁸ Peter S. Cowe, *Ani: World Architectural Heritage of a Medieval Armenian Capital*. (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2001); Raymond Kévorkian, ed. *Ani-Capitale de l'Arménie en l'An Mil*. (Paris: Paris-Musées, 2001).

⁹ Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia during the Crusades: The Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins, 1080-1393*. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000); Claude Mutafian, *Le Royaume Arménien de Cilicie, XIIe-XIVe siècle*. (The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, XIIth-XIVth c.), (Paris: Editions CNRS, 2002).

¹⁰ Robert Browning, *The Byzantine Empire*. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992).

¹¹ Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, (Teaneck: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982).

a canon that defined the status and beliefs of these non-Muslim communities in the empire¹². The Armenians, although initially free to practice their religious beliefs, were considered in many aspects as second class citizens, subject to numerous taxes and discriminatory laws, especially in legal courts.

During the late 19th century, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, often referred to as the “Bloody Sultan”, launched a number of massacres against the Armenians who agitated for reforms.¹³ These Hamidian Massacres (1894-1896), carried out in most Armenian towns and villages, led to the death of around 250,000 innocent victims and attracted the attention of the Foreign Powers, who started exerting political pressure on the “Sick Man of Europe” as Turkey was referred to.¹⁴ Foreign missionaries, who had established posts in the Ottoman Empire, recorded these events and tried to protect, educate and heal these minorities.

In 1908, owing to some constitutional reforms and certain waves of liberalism, the “Young Turks”¹⁵ movement was formed with the aim of reforming the corrupt Ottoman Empire. A group of this movement, known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), eventually deposed the Sultan. A wave of euphoria swept among the Armenians and the minorities of the Ottoman cities. However, very soon, hopes for a modern, democratic state gradually

¹² Akçam, *Ibid.*, 23-24.

¹³ Joan Haslip, *The Sultan: the Life of Abdul Hamid II*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), 217-226.

¹⁴ Christopher de Bellaigue, “Turkey’s Hidden Past” in *The New York Review of Books*, March 8, 2001; “The Sick Man of Europe” in *The New York Review of Books*, July 5, 2001.

¹⁵ Vahakn Dadrian, “The Secret Young Turk Ittihadist Conference and the Decision for the World War I Genocide of the Armenians” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* № 7:2, Fall 1993, 173-174.

evaporated, especially after the Adana massacres of 1909,¹⁶ when it became clear that the program of the “Young Turks” was one of total Turkification with no allowances for Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks or Jews in this project.

At the outset of the First World War in 1914, Turkey, on the side of its staunch ally Germany, fought Russia but was badly defeated.¹⁷ The Armenians who lived on both sides of the borders were accused of conspiring with the “Christian” enemy. The leaders of the CUP movement decided that this was an opportune moment in history to “cleanse” the Ottoman Empire of the Armenians, who on the eve of the Genocide counted around 2,000,000. Hence, starting with April 24, 1915, (today considered as the Genocide Commemoration Day for Armenians), the Armenian intelligentsia of Istanbul and its suburbs was arrested, hanged, executed or banished. This was the beginning of what would later be referred to as the first Genocide of the 20th century. In all towns and villages where Armenians resided, orders of deportation and banishment were issued and enforced by the five main CUP actors: Mehmed Tala’at Pasha (Minister of the Interior, 1874-1921),¹⁸ Ismail Enver Pasha (Minister of War, 1881-1922),¹⁹ Ahmed Jemal Pasha (Minister of the Marine, 1872-1922),²⁰ Nazim Bey Senâlikli CUP Chairman (1872-1926) and Dr. Behaeddine Shakir (1874-1922), head

¹⁶ Dr. Racho Donef, 1909: *Ottoman Archives Related to the Adana Massacres* (Sydney, Australia, 2008).

¹⁷ Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*. (London: Fourth Estate, 2005).

¹⁸ He was assassinated on March 15, 1921 in Berlin by Soghomon Tehlirian, a Genocide survivor, who was captured and acquitted after a two-day trial.

¹⁹ He was killed in Tajikistan in 1922 by Hagop Melkumov, an Armenian member of the Red Army.

²⁰ He was assassinated in 1922 in Tbilisi (Georgia) by Stepan Dzaghighian.

of the political department of the Special Organization.²¹

Over one million Armenians were sent to starve and perish in the Syrian desert, especially around the city of Deir Zor.²² Thousands of others died on the death marches from typhus, dysentery and starvation. Others were forced to convert to Islam and the small minority which survived is known today as the Armenian Diaspora. The American ambassador in Istanbul at that time, Henry Morgenthau, described the horrible events of this period with the following words: *"I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared with the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915."*²³

Towards the end of World War I and with the eventual defeat of the Ottoman Empire, an independent Armenia emerged briefly on May 28, 1918, only to be forced to later become Soviet Armenia.²⁴ The Treaty of Sèvres of 1920,²⁵

²¹ Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2006); Vahakn Dadrian, "The Role of the Special Organisation in the Armenian Genocide during the First World War." In Panayi (ed.) *Minorities in Wartime, National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia During the Two World Wars*. (Oxford and Providence: Berg Publishers Limited, 1993), 50-82.

²² Richard Hovannisian, *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics and Ethics*. (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide, The Complete History*. (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2011)

²³ Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003). First published in 1919 by Doubleday, Page, Garden City, N.Y.

²⁴ George A. Bournoutian, *A Concise History of the Armenian People: From Ancient Times to the Present*. 2nd ed. (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2002); Christopher Walker, *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*. Revised Second Edition. (England: Routledge, 1990).

²⁵ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. (New York: Avon Books, 1990).

which had promised Armenians a state based on most of the lands of historical Armenia, succumbed to the higher politics of the victorious Allies. With the emergence of Mustafa Kemal “Atatürk” (1881-1938), who aspired towards a modern nation in Turkey,²⁶ and with the Communists sitting on the other side of the border, it became clear to the Foreign Ministers of Europe that the “Armenian Question” could be tabled or classified for the present. This indifference led to another wave of massacres and deportations into Syria and Lebanon, this time from the “Cilician lands” under French control.

By 1923, most of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire had lost their lives and those who survived had lost all of their lands, properties, family members and some even their sanity. By World War II, Hitler could confidently declare, “*Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?*”²⁷

With the dismantling of the Soviet Union, an independent Armenia, on the territories previously forming Soviet Armenia, was declared on September 21, 1991. The remaining Armenian towns in the ancestral lands in Eastern Turkey were razed to the ground; the churches, monasteries, schools were destroyed and the properties looted or confiscated.²⁸ Thus the cultural genocide, following the physical one, attempted

²⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*. (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1194).

²⁷ In August 1939, Hitler asks his generals this rhetorical question in relation to the Poles. Kevork B. Bardakjian, *Hitler and the Armenian Genocide*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Zoryan Institute, Special Report Number 3, 1985), 1; Fisk, *Ibid.*, 405.

²⁸ Kevork. K. Baghdjian, *The Confiscation of Armenian Properties by the Turkish Government Said to be Abandoned*. Translated and edited by A.B. Gureghian. (Antelias: Khatchig Babikian Literary Fund. № 3, 2010).

to erase all traces of thousands of years of Armenian history and tradition.²⁹

The perpetrators remain unpunished.³⁰ No judgment of Nuremberg took place for the Armenians, no recognition of the Genocide, no compensation, nor public apology. Turkey to date continues to deny that the Genocide of the Armenians ever occurred, and the International Community, though an eye witness at the time, sways between the double standards of justice and economic interests.

Ninety six years later, the survivors' descendants hope and pray for Justice³¹ to be eventually restored so that the festering wounds of Armenians may heal, the ghosts interred, and the new generations start looking forward instead of lingering in the haunted shadows of the great witness of all time: Mount Ararat.³²

²⁹ Serge Momjian, *Memories of the Past*, (Austin & Macauley Publishers, 2010).

³⁰ Gerard Libaridian, *A Crime of Silence: The Armenian Genocide*. Permanent Peoples' Tribunal. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Zoryan Institute, 1985).

³¹ Alfred de Zayas, *The Genocide Against the Armenians 1915-1923 and the Relevance of the 1948 Genocide Convention*. (Beirut: Haigazian University, 2010).

³² Mount Ararat lies today in Eastern Turkey and symbolizes for Armenians the usurped homeland. Michael J. Arlen, *Passage to Ararat*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975).

PROLOGUE

Nicomedia 2002

Izmit - Adabazar - Ovajik

August 26, 2002: The car was rolling on the Golden Horn linking European Istanbul to Asia Minor. Accompanied by my husband, Jacques Ekmekji, I was heading east to the historical region of Nicomedia from where my family had originated. This was our first trip to Turkey and the first return of any member of the Arsenian family since 1915. Hence, this trip was quite a *nostos*, a return to the birthplace of my late grandfather Hagop Arsenian, my grandmother Hrout Gulemerian, my father Noubar and uncle Norair, all of whom I had personally known and loved. Not speaking any Turkish myself, I had requested from Deacon Vagharshag Seropian of the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul to find us a trustworthy Armenian driver. He suggested Kapo, a pleasant, loquacious Armenian from Bilecik, who, being a native himself, was very familiar with the area and drove us confidently towards our destination.

The villages of the District of Nicomedia, historic Bithynia (modern Kocaeli), are mostly agricultural and strewn with beautiful aspen trees on both sides of the road. The Armenians are said to have settled here between 1590 and 1608, coming from areas such as Agn, Arapkir, Erzeroum, Sebastia and other regions. Gradually, these settlements developed into 42 towns and villages around the capital of the province (*sanjak*), Izmit, and counted at the turn of the 20th century some 61,675 Armenians,¹ 51 churches,² one monastery and

¹ Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du Génocide* (The Armenians in the Ottoman Empire on the Eve of the Armenian Genocide) (Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire ARHIS, 1992), 124.

² Ibid., 59-60, based on the Armenian Patriarchate Census (February 1910-Aug. 1914).

53 schools, catering to 7,480 Armenian students.³ Among these towns and villages were Bardizag, Zakar, Manoushag, Ovajik, Jamavayr, Arslanbeg, the monastery of Armash and, of course, the most urban center of all, Adabazar.⁴

Some 100 kilometers (62 miles) east of Istanbul, the huge sign on the right side of the highway read Izmit (Kocaeli), population 570,000 (*nufus*). I had often heard my father speak of Izmit, the city from which they had been deported, of the pharmacy my grandfather had left behind, of the *Izmitsis*,⁵ the people of this city who were considered fellow citizens (*hayrenagits*).

Here on the shores of the Sea of Marmara, the Roman Emperors Diocletian (243-316)⁶ and later Constantine (274-337) had chosen this city to be their eastern imperial capital, long before the new capital of Byzantium, Constantinople, was constructed.

After driving for a few miles, on the outskirts of the old city, my attention was drawn to a modern building adjacent to a dilapidated old pink one. “Stop,” I shouted, “stop here.” Kapo looked back amazed and asked. “Here? Why do you want to stop here? This is the railway station.” “Please,” I said and grabbing the cameras, I jumped out of the car. Jacques followed me with the VCR and started taking pictures of the old railway station. (Pl. I) All around it weeds and thorns made the access quite difficult, yet we managed to get close

³ Minas K. Kassabian (Farhad), *Hayere Nikometio Kavarin Mech, Ousoumnasiroutiun, Vijakragan tsoutsagnerov yev karderov*. (The Armenians in the Province of Nicomedia: A study with Statistics, Tables and Maps.) (Bardizag: Azadamard Press, 1913), 257-263.

⁴ Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *Ibid.*, 131.

⁵ The Armenian suffix *tsi* at the end of place names denotes the citizens or population of that particular region (AAE: Translator's initials).

⁶ T. Cornell and J. Matthews, *Atlas of the Roman World*, (Equinox Ltd., 1982), 171.

to the building. Why had the Turks not demolished the old building when the new one was constructed? Why had they preserved the walls of this old witness of the horrors of time? Approaching one of the barred windows, I peeped inside, discerning the dark corridors and halls. “They were here,” I told Jacques, “they were in this building 90 years and a month ago to the day. My father, uncle, grandparents and probably other relatives we never had a chance to meet. It is in this building that all their dreams were shattered and the deportation to unknown lands began.” Peter Balakian states that the “*century’s first genocide began in part in the cattle cars of the Anatolian and the Baghdad Railway.*”⁷ Similarly, Hilmar Kaiser comments, “*Thus, the Ottoman government introduced into modern history railway transport of civilian populations towards extermination.*”⁸

Suddenly, I was approached by a policeman who shouted in Turkish, asking me why I was taking pictures of an old wreck when the pride of the modern Turkish railway stood a few meters away. I answered in English that I was a tourist, an archeologist, interested in relics, and thus more fascinated by ancient buildings rather than modern architecture. Little did he know that I was the grandchild of that poor family whom his grandfather’s generation, probably one of the local *gendarmes*, had driven away almost a century ago.

Kapo advised us to move on and not to further provoke the policeman, so we sat back in the car and drove towards the oldest part of the city. It is in these streets and alleys that we were to find traces of the old Izmit. First we stopped in the

⁷ Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris, The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 190.

⁸ Hilmar Kaiser, “The Baghdad Railway and the Armenian Genocide 1915-1916: A Case Study in German Resistance and Complicity” in *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, Richard G. Hovannisian, (ed.) (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 75.

beautiful public garden on the banks of the Sea of Marmara. An old Clock Tower was erected there in 1901 designed by the Armenian architect Mihran Azaryan.⁹ In Ottoman language (Turkish using Arabic script), an engraving on the pedestal of the clock attested to the name and date of the construction on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the accession of Sultan Abdul Hamid II to the throne. (Pl. I). What an irony: the Armenians were gone but the Armenian clock was still ticking away, standing erect, overlooking the city. What a peaceful garden this was. I imagined my grandmother sitting here with her two little children, one toddler, Noubar, bouncing all around the place while baby Norair slept in her lap. Were they aware of the fate awaiting them? Did they suspect what calamity was in store? Why did they move from Adabazar to Izmit? Would they have been safer there?

“Take me to the Armenian quarter of Izmit,”¹⁰ I requested from Kapo. He looked blankly at me and said that currently there were no Armenian residents in Izmit, neither did churches nor Armenian schools exist in the area. Yes, but where was Old Izmit? Where was the pharmacy? Is it possible that nothing had survived? Yet according to records, Izmit, capital of Nicomedia, counted at the beginning of the 20th century 12,000 inhabitants of whom 4,635 were Armenians forming 891 families.¹¹ They resided mostly in the western

⁹ Mihran Azaryan (1876-1952) from Izmit also designed the pier of Büyükkada, Turkey.cf. Hasan Kuruyazici (ed.), *Armenian Architects of Istanbul in the Era of Westernization*, (Istanbul: International Hrant Dink Foundation Publications, 2010), 127. He was a contemporary of the Lebanese Armenian architect, Mardiros Altounian (1889-1958), who designed the Clock Tower and the Parliament Building in downtown Beirut. (AAE)

¹⁰ For post card scenes of the Armenian Quarter of Izmit see Yves Ternon and Jean Claude Kebabdjian, *L'Arménie d'Antan: L'Arménie à travers la carte postale ancienne* (Armenia of the Past Through Ancient Post Cards) (Editions HC, 2009), 45.

¹¹ Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *Ibid.*, 124

part of the city in the area of KadiBayir/Karabakh around the Mother of God Cathedral (*Astvadzadzin*) which was the seat of a bishopric.¹² The people spoke Armenian (unlike other villages where Armenians spoke Turkish), and had published, in 1850, a periodical entitled *Hayrenaser* (*The Patriot*). The economy was mainly based on commerce run by Armenians and Greeks as well as small industries, such as silk manufacture, tobacco, salt and *fez* making.¹³

Asking a local passer-by about the oldest part of the city, we were led into the western area of the city, with narrow winding alleys and a steep road leading uphill. (Pl. I) All the houses had a different architecture with larger windows. These could not be Turkish houses, I reflected; the windows of Turkish houses are usually small and have latticed woodwork. These are large. One building looked like a school or more like an Armenian Evangelical Church. Some doors had rusty locks on them. Where were the owners? Could they have been abandoned for almost 90 years with no one using them? The scenery overlooking the Marmara was breathtaking, the winding narrow roads so romantic. Little children gathered around the car. Were these the offspring of those who had used our furniture?¹⁴ Our pharmacy? Too many questions and only cold stones to stare back. I could imagine the streets filled with furniture on that July day in 1915, while Armenian families were trying to get some cash for their lifetime belongings. Where did they all end up? Where did all the *Izmitsis* resettle? Of the group that left on that July evening, only my grandfather

¹² Kassabian, *Ibid.*, 28-30; 243; Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 551; Haygazn Ghazarian, *Tseghasban Turke*, (Genocide Committed by the Turks), 2nd ed. (Antelias: Khachig Babikian Literary Fund, № 5, 2010), 215.

¹³ A red felt cap with a black tassel worn by most men of the Ottoman Empire. (AAE)

¹⁴ See Baghdjian, *Ibid.*, 2010.

with eight¹⁵ members of the family made it to Jerusalem fourteen months later. Of the rest, my grandfather never found out their whereabouts. Had they escaped, or had they, like thousands others, ended up in the deserts of Deir Zor?

Driving 45 kms east of Izmit, we reached the large metropolis of Adabazar, a busy modern city bustling with traffic. In 1999, the city was the epicentre of a large earthquake which shook up the entire Istanbul area. Many buildings still bore signs of cracks and destruction. The Adabazar population is said to have originally settled there around 1608, emigrating from the region of Agn.¹⁶ However, on the eve of the Armenian Genocide, the city included around 12,450 Armenians (2,081 homes),¹⁷ mostly living in the centre of the city, around the Church of St. Garabed and St. Archangels Church (*Sourp Hreshdagabed*) which in 1919, alone had 1300 houses in its parish.¹⁸

A stop at an Adabazar café for a quick lunch, ice cream and coffee appealed to all of us, especially Kapo. Again not knowing where to start, we opted for the oldest part of the city and started looking for old pharmacies as a possible hint for the location of my grandfather's pharmacy. For it is in this city that my grandfather had decided to start his career, and it was in the oldest part of the city that the first

¹⁵ The eight people, in addition to Hagop Arsenian, who survived the Genocide, were the three members of the Arsenian family - Hrout, Noubar and Norair - and five of the Gulemerian Family - Hrout's parents Krikor and Serpouhi, brother Simon and sisters Verkiné and Victoria.

¹⁶ A. Biberian and V. Yeghicheyan, *Badmakirk Adapazari*, (History of Adabazar) (Paris: 1960), 42-55; Kassabian, *Hayere Nikometio Kavarin Mech*.

¹⁷ Kévorkian & Paboudjian, *Ibid.*, 136; Ghazarian, *Ibid.*, 216, states that the number of the Armenians of Adabazar was 12,463 forming 2,103 families,

¹⁸ Kévorkian & Paboudjian, *Ibid.*, 136; Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 551; Ghazarian, *Ibid.*, 215, mentions two other churches as well: St. Lousavoritch and St. Stepanos.

Arsenian pharmacy was to be established.¹⁹ The second was abandoned in Izmit in 1915, the third in Jerusalem in 1948, when due to the partition of the city, it lay in ruins in the Mamilla quarter which became *No Man's Land* between Jordan and Israel. The last pharmacy in East Jerusalem was closed in 2001, after having served the Jerusalem community for fifty years and in which my late father Noubar had continuously practised, since 1950 and until the age of 86, as Jerusalem's oldest practising pharmacist having thus earned, like his late father before him, the title of "The Sheikh of Pharmacists" (*Sheikh el Sayadleh*).²⁰

Standing in front of the oldest looking pharmacy in old Adabazar, I called my father in Jerusalem and told him that I was in his birthplace and in front of an *eczane*, (pharmacy) in the oldest part of Adabazar. (Pl. II) My father was extremely moved and said, "Ask them if they know of any *Arsenoghlu*s around."²¹ His constant concern was whether any of the family members could have escaped Deir Zor and returned to resettle in the area.²² Alas, like Izmit, Adabazar had also opted for silence. Later, upon our return to Istanbul, when I inquired at the Armenian Patriarchate about the old

¹⁹ The name of Hagop Arsenian, the pharmacist, features in the book mentioning the Armenian pharmacists during the Ottoman Empire.cf. Arsen Yarman, *Osmanli Saglik Hizmetlerinde Ermeniler ve Surp Pirgiç Ermeni Hastanesi Tarihi*. (Hospital Health Care System of the Ottoman Armenians and the Armenian History of St. Pirgiç Armenian Hospital Foundation), (Istanbul: 2001), 305.

²⁰ While the title of "Sheikh el Sayadleh", i.e., Sheikh of Pharmacists, was conferred on Hagop Arsenian by the Jordanian Government (Pl. XVIII), his son Noubar earned the same title from the Palestinian community of Jerusalem after practicing there continuously from 1950 to 1986.(AAE)

²¹ *oghlu* or son being the Turkish substitute of the Armenian suffix *ian*.

²² In 1918, some families who had survived the massacres of 1915 returned to Adabazar. The Kabakians returned from Eregli and lived till 1923 in the city until they were subjected to another massacre by the forces of Kemal Atatürk. cf. Ohannes Kebekian, *Adapazar asdvadzarial aba nahadagial*, (Adapazar God Given and Martyred), (Paris: 1962).

documents of the Adabazar churches, I was told nothing was preserved. No birth, baptismal, marriage or death certificates could testify that the Arsenians had been here. Kabakian,²³ in his memoirs, recalls how the St. Archangels (*Sourp Hreshdagabed*) Church with all its contents was burnt down in 1923 by the Kemalist forces.

We left Adabazar, heading for our last stop, Ovajik. Before approaching it, however, we passed by the village of Baghchejig which Kapo explained was the Turkish name for the Armenian town of Bardizag. It was so close to Ovajik that I understood why my grandmother was so happy when my sister Sona married Edouard, son of Garabed Attamian from Bardizag. During a dinner preceding Sona's and Edouard's wedding in 1971, they all spent the whole evening reminiscing about the old country and singing songs of the two villages. This must have been quite a peaceful neighborhood at the turn of the 20th century.

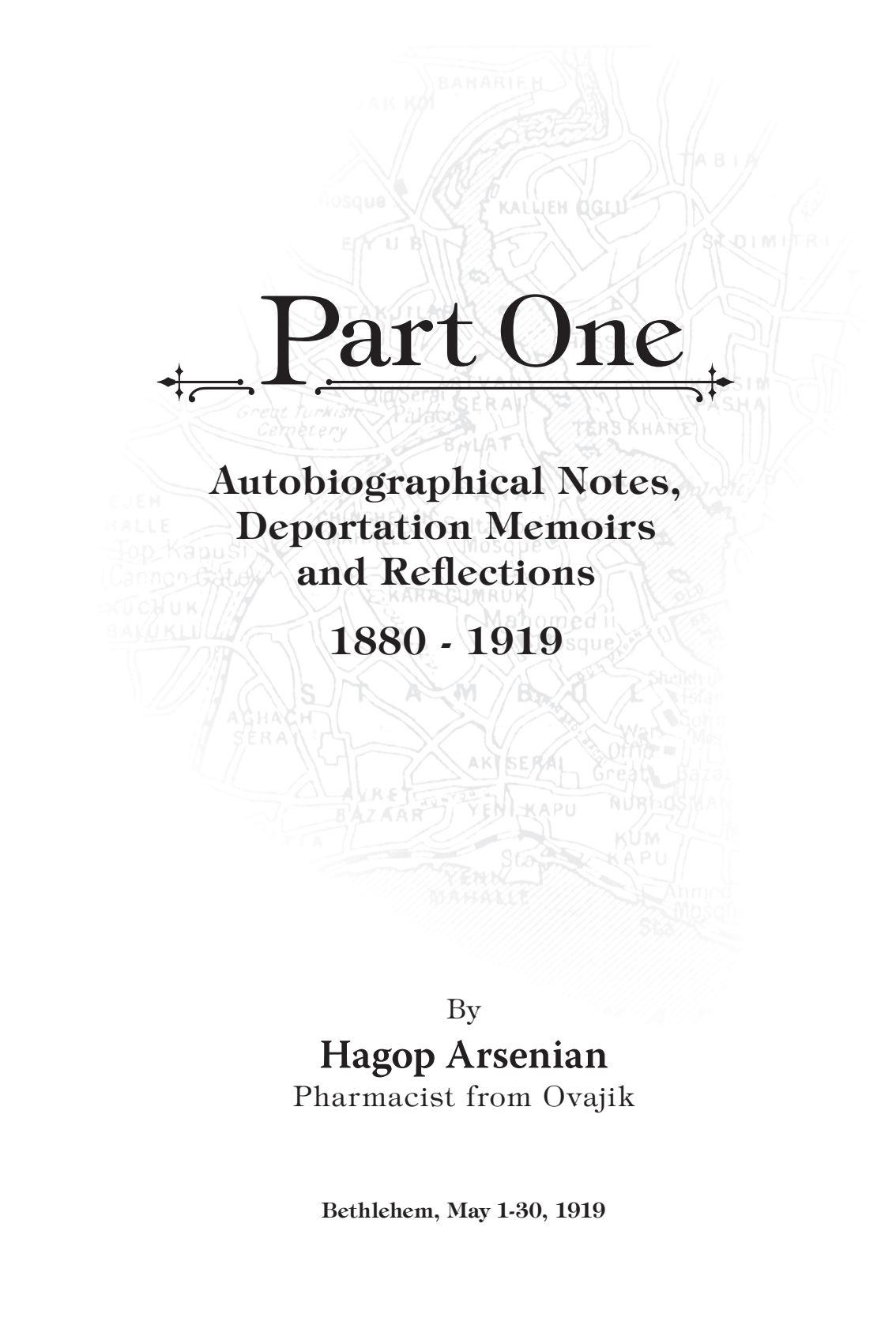
At the entrance of the next group of houses, where a sign read "Yuvajik" (Pl. II), we veered right into a small village. In the background loomed the new Ovajik with high rise buildings, but the older part of the village could very easily have been a still picture of what life was like when my grandfather was growing up here. On a small hill with a breathtaking view, were peasants plowing the fields and livestock alongside the streets. Standing there I thought of another resident of this village, Serpouhi Tavoukdjian, whose family lived here in 1915 and was deported like the rest of the Armenians. Later, as the only member of the Tavoukdjian family who survived the Genocide, she transcribed her memoirs in a poignant narrative of faith and perseverance.²⁴ Before the Genocide

²³ Kebekian, *Ibid.*, 137-138.

²⁴ Serpouhi Tavoukdjian, *Exiled* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1933).

there were some 500 Armenian families living here, 3,333 inhabitants clustered around the Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator (*Sourp Krikor Lousavoritch*).²⁵ Yet there was not a sign, neither a dilapidated Church nor a reminder of the Vartanian school, not even an old cemetery inscribed with Armenian names. However, I did not need papers to prove all of that; I had my grandfather's journal in which he had meticulously inscribed his autobiography, spanning sixty years of his life including his early childhood, deportation and settlement as a Diasporan. But it was here, in Ovajik, in this little village of Nicomedia, that my initial trip ended and where Hagop Arsenian's life had started in 1880...

²⁵ Ghazarian, *Ibid.*, 216



Part One

Autobiographical Notes, Deportation Memoirs and Reflections

1880 - 1919

By

Hagop Arsenian

Pharmacist from Ovajik

Bethlehem, May 1-30, 1919



Hagop Arsenian
(1880-1963)

ARSENIAN'S FOREWORD

Now that the world's turbulent storm has abated and the world war has come to an end and mankind is gradually starting to resume its normal and peaceful condition.

Now that the major powers are gathered in Paris to have their peace talks that would eventually be translated into concrete measures that would safeguard and ensure permanent future, peace and stability.

Now that finally the gloomy, clouded skies have lifted from the much tortured and martyred Armenians and the survivors will shortly have the good fortune of seeing the fulfillment of their long awaited dreams.

Now it is opportune for me to provide a detailed, thorough account of my experiences. For after surviving the deportation, witnessing terrible events as a soldier on the front, and military imprisonment, and after the tempestuous events of the past five years, I am now alive, in the peaceful city of Bethlehem, surrounded by my beloved ones.

Hence, now I would like to put into writing the main milestones of my life, from 1900 to this day, especially those bloody events pertaining to the exile and the unending deportation road shared by every uprooted Armenian.

I have great hope that by reading these life memoirs, my children will learn some lessons for the future: namely, instilling in them the desire for boldness and diligence, strengthening their self-confidence as well as sharpening their sense of caution and farsightedness.

It is also hoped that they will learn to scorn injustice and face hardship, never to get discouraged, and become leaders in control of their lives and models of behavior to others.

Hagop Arsenian

*May 1, 1919
Bethlehem*

Chapter One

Ovajik

July 1880 – March 1907

I was born in July 1880¹ in Ovajik, one of the villages of the suburb of Nicomedia. I was the third child of Arsen from Merdin and Mariam from Silo who, through marriage, formed a modest family. My father died two months before my birth, and my poor mother, widowed at a young age, was burdened with the responsibility and difficult task of raising three young children.

Our only means of survival was a small piece of land growing mulberries (*ttastan*) and a grove (*ayki*). However, refusing to surrender to hopelessness, my dear mother engaged in small businesses such as tobacco sale, harvesting and fieldwork, and in her free time, housework and making brooms which she used to sell at 30 *paras*² each. Her terrible situation ameliorated gradually when my two brothers started at a young age to work on farms as help and earn their daily dry bread; this way I became my poor mother's only financial worry. What a devoted and selfless model of a mother she was, may her memory always be blessed.

¹ The manuscript uses both 1880 and 1881, but I have opted for 1880 as his tombstone reads. The dates in the first part of the manuscript are according to the old Julian calendar used in the Ottoman Empire; thus, an additional 13 days will have to be added to convert the dates to the Gregorian chronology. (AAE)

² Turkish Currency used at the time. One *para* equalled 40 piasters. According to Eflatoun E. Elmajian, *In the Shadow of the Almighty, My Life Story*, (California: Pasadena, E. E. Elmajian, 1982), 31: "One Turkish gold pound was 100 piasters, equaling five mejidias and each mejidia was 20 piasters." The Ottoman gold coin was equivalent to five US dollars then and the mejidia to approximately one US dollar. The mejidia refers to a silver coin minted by Sultan Abdul Mejid (1839-1861).(AAE)

I spent my childhood and adolescence mostly in privation. For days and weeks, instead of eating bread made of wheat and flour, I used to eat *jat*, a mixture made of corn flour. I was barely seven when my brother accompanied me to the village school. We only had native teachers from Ovajik who taught language and grammar, as well as reading, using the following textbooks: *Voski Madenig* and Third and Fourth year *Mayreni Lezou* (Mother Tongue). Afterwards my teachers were Zareh Khacherian, Hapet Ghazarian, Mihran Papazian, Hovhanes Guyrjian and Harutiu Chekidian, each of whom taught for a short while and then left the school. During my last years in school, the principal was native Hovhaness Effendi³ Chetchetian and his assistant teachers were Harutiu Goshdoyan and Mihran Papazian. They taught us the following subjects: Fourth Year Mother Language, History of Holy Scriptures, Bozajian's Arithmetic, Turkish and Grammar. I sat for four public exams, and in 1894, I received a report card with the following statement:

Copy of Certificate of Education of Hagopig Arsenian, 4th Grade Student at Vartanian School – Ovajik			
Subject	Grade⁴	Comments	Date
Turkish	6+	Very Good	July 18
Armenian	6	Good	July 19
Arithmetic	6+	Very Good	July 20
Religion	6	Good	August 1
<i>The above grades have been examined and confirmed by the effendi examiners and accordingly this certificate has been given.</i> August 1, 1894 <i>H. Chetchetian</i>			

³ Turkish title equivalent to honorable sir.

⁴ Grades over ten.

The boys' section in the school was composed of two large halls: the kindergarten and the elementary school. During the following years, Mihran Effendi Papazian and his assistant teachers were in charge. During the academic year 1895-96, we spent most of our time reading a few classical Armenian pieces (*krapar*), and suffered some French conversation classes with Garabed Berberian, who claimed to be a specialist of the French language. During the academic year 1896-97, we were lucky to have as principal and teacher Krikor Effendi Mekhalian, who, after stimulating and exciting our dormant brains for eight months, resigned and left Ovajik. We again had to pay the price of this bad custom of constantly having to change teachers.

After Mekhalian Effendi left us, we had ample free time and on the night of August 15, 1897, I spent a sleepless night thinking about whether I should take the course of Education and continue school or should I shift towards a career. *My blood had blocked my head so much*⁵ that I became sick and stayed in bed for three months. As soon as I got better, I started helping my brothers in the tobacco business. All that winter, instead of turning the white pages of books, my small fingers rolled the red and dusty tobacco leaves. This was a total waste for my mental development. But they say that patience is life, and soon enough happy times and events would be in store for us.

During the school year 1898-1899, Krikor Effendi Harutunian became our school principal and until the reopening of the school, I continued with the tobacco business. After working hours, I remembered the little education given to us by Mekhalian Effendi, so I took my bag full of books and returned to school without informing my brothers, at the risk of staying hungry and thirsty. But after a while

⁵ Armenian expression meaning to be undecided and confused.

they agreed to let me continue my education. I continued for two more years under the strict supervision of our dear principal and teacher Krikor Effendi and finally completed the academic cycle; for the first time in the academic history of Ovajik, we had a graduating class and, together with my nine classmates, we finally received our diplomas.⁶ In my heart, I was very grateful to Krikor Effendi Harutunian, a teacher (later he became a priest and was martyred) who never spared time nor effort to encourage my educational capabilities and supported me in furthering my academic life. He taught me how to distinguish between the useful and the useless, the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly. Finally, the humanitarian, the ideal and civilized training of Krikor Effendi Harutunian came to bear fruit and hope. I am eternally grateful to him. May his memory be always blessed.

The following is a copy of my graduating Certificate from Ovajik's Vartanian National School.

⁶ From this group we are currently only four survivors: Dr. Krikor Deirmenjian, Pharmacist Sarkis Selian, (Aleppo), myself in Gaza and Father Arsen Varjabedian in Jerusalem. (H. Arsenian's footnote, 1925).

Subject	Grade	Subject	Grade
Conduct	Excellent	Book Keeping	Good
Religion	V. Good	Legal Knowledge ...	V. Good
Armenian	V. Good	Hygiene	Excellent
Arithmetic	Excellent	Calligraphy	Good
Algebra	Excellent	Singing	
Geography	Average	Foreign Languages ..	
National History ...	Average	Turkish	Excellent
World History		French	Best

Mr. Hagop Arsenian, having completed the educational curriculum of the school, and having successfully passed the public exam with the above mentioned grades, and being endowed with all the satisfactory skills, accordingly, the school administration and board of managers hereby award him this certificate.

1900, July 23

Board

Principal

Ovajik, Nicomedia

(stamp)

Krikor Harutunian

Vartanian School Certificate

Ovajik, 1900

Վ. ԿԱՅԱԳԻՐ ԸՆԹԱՑԱՒԱՐՏԻ Օ Վ Ա Ճ Ը Պ Ի



Վարդանեան ազգ. վարժարանի
ԱՇԱԿԵՐՏԵԼՈՑ

ՈՒՍՄՈՒՆՐ	ՆԻՇ	ՈՒՍՄՈՒՆՐ	ՆԻՇ
Վարդ	Վարդան	Յանգուլան	Յանգ
Կրտ	Կրտսեր	Այնու. Գեորգի	Այնու
Հայրեն	Հայրեն	Առաքելան	Առաքել
Թաթևան	Թաթևան	Գեորգի	Գեորգ
Դրեմյան	Դրեմյան	Արշա. Արշաք	Արշաք
Այնթափան	Այնթափ	Ստար լեզունք	Ստար
Պարս. Տանային	Պարս.	Տանային	Տանային
Պարս. Լեզուն. Այնթափ	Պարս.	Դրեմյան	Դրեմյան

Պարուն... Վարդան... վարժարանիս կրթական
յայտագրոյն համեմատ իր ընթացքն աւարտած եւ տարեկան վեր
ջին հրապարակային ընտանեամբ վերոյգրեալ նիշերն շահելով
պահանջուած հետաքննութիւնն ձեռք բերած ըլլալով, ճշօրէնաւ
թիւն եւ Հոգեւորաճութիւն վարժարանիս կուտայ լանոր սոյն
ընթացաւարտի վկայագիրն:

1900 թ. մայիս 23
Օվանդ-Նիկովիցի

Հոգեւորաճութիւն

Տնօրէնութիւն



Վարդան
Յանգ

During the scholastic year 1900-1901, upon the recommendation of the Principal and the Board of the school, I became an assistant teacher. This gave me not only the chance to further improve myself academically, but also ample time to prepare for and choose my future profession. The pay was ridiculously low, but any other alternative was impossible, so I was obliged to accept the offer and managed to complete the year. At least I had a chance to enjoy and benefit from the continuous good advice and guidance of our dear Principal.

In 1901, Saturday, September 22, I set out to start a new phase of my life. First, I went to Kadikeuy,⁷ where my cousin Harutiun (whose mother was my father's sister) lived, and through his clever planning arranged for safe transport to Bolis.⁸ At that time to go from the suburbs to Bolis was as difficult and impossible as going to the United States. On that day, the boat transported us to Haydar Pasha Port and then to Kadikeuy, to my aunt's house. We spent interminable, difficult and tiring long hours. *My hair turned white that day.*⁹ The next day, Sunday, we spent visiting family and friends. I was very happy to finally be in a big metropolis like Bolis. (Map 2)

I had to start on the long journey towards my future education and career. After spending a number of sleepless nights, I woke up one morning and like Archimedes shouting "Eureka," I discovered what I wanted my career to be. I wanted to become a pharmacist. My initial plan was

⁷ Site of the historical meeting of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, during which the final separation of Eastern and Western churches took place. cf. Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols., (Liverpool: University Press, 2005, 2007).

⁸ Armenian name for Constantinopolis, modern Istanbul.

⁹ Armenian expression describing a long and exhausting experience. (AAE)

to work in a pharmacy, but it was difficult from the first day to find a suitable place. I did not need too much money to live on, so upon the recommendation of my aunt, I went to *Sobaji*¹⁰ Ardash next to the Armenian Church (*Kum Kapu*), and like a newly ordained priest, I was given an apron to wear and for 10 piasters I started working at his place. My job was to construct stoves (*sobas*), assemble the pipes and then install them in the house of the rich families of Kadikeuy. I worked at this unfortunate job until January 20, 1902. Afterwards, with my cousin, we went to Samatia¹¹ and I started working as an apprentice at Haig Allahverdian's¹² pharmacy. I was thus a step closer to fulfilling my dream. I needed to apply to the university, but to do that I had to show that I had worked in a pharmacy for three years.

During the month of September of the same year, I went on a pilgrim's permit to Armash¹³ and then I went to Izmit and on September 20, 1902, started working at Onnig Effendi Kurdian's pharmacy. Two years later, he gave me a certificate, attesting that I had worked as an apprentice for three years. This was to be used as a recommendation for joining the Pharmacy Department at Istanbul University. I successfully passed the entrance exams and in September 1904, I registered as a pharmacy student at the Faculty of Medicine of Istanbul University. But this was not sufficient

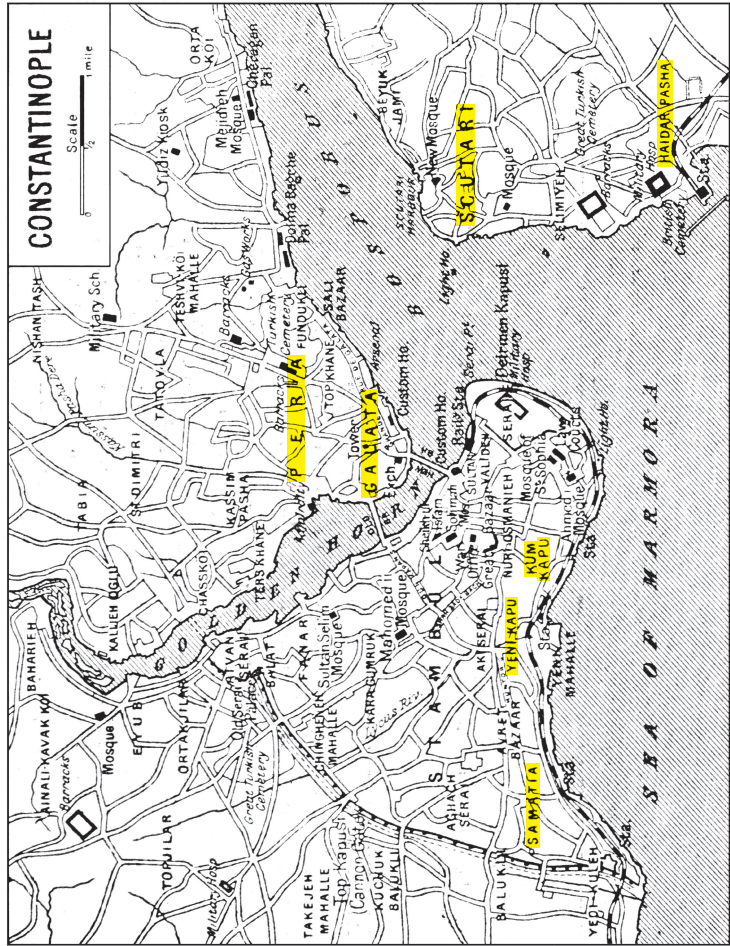
¹⁰ Stove maker.

¹¹ A district of Constantinople. See Map 2.

¹² The list of Armenian pharmacists in the Ottoman Empire mentions an Allahverdi, (Viken-Vensan) in Istanbul 1900-1906. cf. Arsen Yarman, *Ibid.*, 305.

¹³ A pilgrimage city north of Izmit where a monastery was founded in 1611 and a seminary established in the 19th century by Bishop Maghakia Ormanian and the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Khoren Ashekian. cf. Paruyr Muradyan and Astghik Musheghyan, *Armashi Tbrevanke*, (The Seminary of Armash, 1998). See also Chavarche Nartouni's "Quitter Armache" in Anahide Ter Minassian et Houry Varjabédian, *Nos terres d'enfance, l'Arménie des souvenirs*, (Marseille/Beirut: Editions Dar an-Nahar-Parentèses, 2010), 165-172.

Map 2 - Constantinople 1922



The Probert Encyclopaedia, designed, edited and programmed by Matt and Leela Probert, 1993 - 2010 , Southampton, UK
[http://www.probertencyclopedia.com/photolib/maps/Map of Constantinople 1922\(Istanbul\).htm](http://www.probertencyclopedia.com/photolib/maps/Map of Constantinople 1922(Istanbul).htm)

to realize my plans, for it was imperative that I also secure some financial assistance. My mother was unable to work and my brother had to take care of his family.

Many students who were financially unable to provide for their education were looking for patrons and scholarship donors. But I myself refused to do that, considering it an undignified method, so I decided to provide for myself and be the architect of my future and become a self-made individual. Due to that, I found it appropriate to work at a pharmacy at night and go to the University during the day. However, I could not find a pharmacy close enough to the University so I had to look for one in the area of Pera.¹⁴

I finally found one in Pangalti, Antoun Effendi Deuvletian's pharmacy, where I started working on September 30 for thirty piasters a week. It was very difficult for me to commute between Pangalti and the University (*Kum Kapu*) on foot every day (except for Fridays and Sundays), but there was no other way, since I could not spare the little money I had on boats or tramway fares. It was very tiring and difficult, especially during the cold and bitter winter of 1904-1905 in Pera, when for weeks all tramway transport was interrupted and I had to cross either by cargo boat or on foot. In spite of all the hardship, I neither missed my classes, which I attended regularly, nor stopped working at night in order to earn my bread. The final exams were approaching and I had to work very hard not to fail the academic year, especially after all the trouble I had gone through.

On May 15, the University closed. To sit for the final exams on July 1, I felt it was impossible for me to study and work at the same time. Therefore, thanks to my year-long sacrifice and the little I had economized that year, I left my

¹⁴ District of Istanbul now called Beyoğlu. (Map 2)

job at the pharmacy and spent the entire mornings studying very hard at my friends' houses: Hrant Etmekjian from Yeni Kapu, Onnig Andonian from Brousa and Anoushavan Kutnerian from Bardizag. We finally passed our exams successfully and became second year pharmacy students. I was the 5th in my class out of a total of 300 students.

During the three months of the summer vacation, instead of working for an insignificant sum in Bolis, I decided to go to Ovajik to rest and, in order to balance my budget, I took with me a small box of medicine, mostly quinine, and for three months I concocted and sold malaria medicine since there were no doctors at all in the village. This way I had a chance to update my wardrobe and also economize a few pounds. The reopening days of the University were approaching so I had to return to Izmit to get a permit to go to Bolis. However, the officials there informed us that the Armenians were not allowed to travel to Istanbul. It was useless to plead that I was a student at the Medical University. The orders were firm, they said. Later we heard that the attempt made on Sultan Abdul Hamid's life¹⁵ in July was suspected to have been engineered by Armenian revolutionaries. Consequently, the gates of Constantinople were closed to all those who bore Armenian names.

For three whole months, I wrote petitions and appeals to be allowed to go to Bolis, and finally in December 1905, I got my permit to leave. When I reached the University, I found out that my name had been erased from the students' list. Another two months were wasted during which I had to reapply to be readmitted as a student. Therefore, during that academic year, (1905-1906), I could only attend two

¹⁵ In July 21, 1905, a bomb exploded as the Sultan was on his way to the Friday prayer. The blame was conveniently put on the Armenians by the chief of the police. Cf. Haslip, *Ibid.*, 254-255.

months of University. On the other hand, to be able to earn my living, I worked at the Demirjian pharmacy not far from the University, in the Chamberly quarter. I also had a small room at Merjan Khan. In June 1906, the examination period started. Again like the previous year, I went to my friend Hrant Etmekjian's house, where we studied together and in my spare time continued my work at the pharmacy. We passed our exams successfully and without repeating my year, I was qualified to become a third-year pharmacy student.

I spent the summer vacation of 1906 again at Ovajik preparing malaria medicine and attempting to balance my poor and meager budget. That year I left earlier for Bolis to prepare for my doctoral exams. As usual, I was preoccupied with finding means of subsistence. Finally, I found it convenient, during my spare time from University, to work at Aram Adilian's pharmacy, where I was also given a room to spend the night. I started work, content that all facilities were available for me to complete my third year at the University. However, an unexpected, unpleasant event upset all my plans and my peace of mind.

One January evening in 1907, two of my friends, Krikor Deirmenjian, a medical student, and Onnig Zakarian came to the pharmacy; we had dinner together and afterwards spent time happily talking. Later, Onnig left for his room, while Krikor (John) and I started a game of *Nard*.¹⁶ We had not realized that time had passed; suddenly close to midnight, there was a knock at the pharmacy door. When we opened, Commissar Kamil stood there accompanied by some policemen. This official was known for terrorizing

¹⁶ Backgammon or tavli. (AAE)

Armenians in the area of Kum Kapu and Gedig Pasha.¹⁷ Without questioning us or even allowing us to say a word, he dragged us to the central police station. It was his chance to get even with me, since just a week earlier, he had asked me to give him some medicine free of charge, and I had refused to do so without permission from my employer. As a result, this monster had presented a document to his elders, stating that every night we gather at the pharmacy and hold meetings with other Armenian revolutionaries.

One cannot imagine or describe the psychological trauma we went through. We were scared and terrified and thought that all our future was destroyed, for we knew that arrested students would be deported to the suburbs of Bolis without trial. My main and greatest concern was that I was indirectly responsible for the fate of my friend Krikor Deirmenjian, whose parents were under financial and social pressure to ensure his studies, especially that he was a last year medical student.

After spending thirty five days in prison, under the direst conditions imaginable, deprived of visits of friends and relatives, we were finally set free due to lack of evidence. However, this was not the end of our problems. The University used to take student attendance every day and all the names were read aloud. If any student absented himself for more than eight days, without prior notice and permission from the principal, his name would be erased from the students' list. Krikor's friends were bold enough and had the good heartedness to respond to his name whenever attendance was taken, so his name was not erased and he immediately

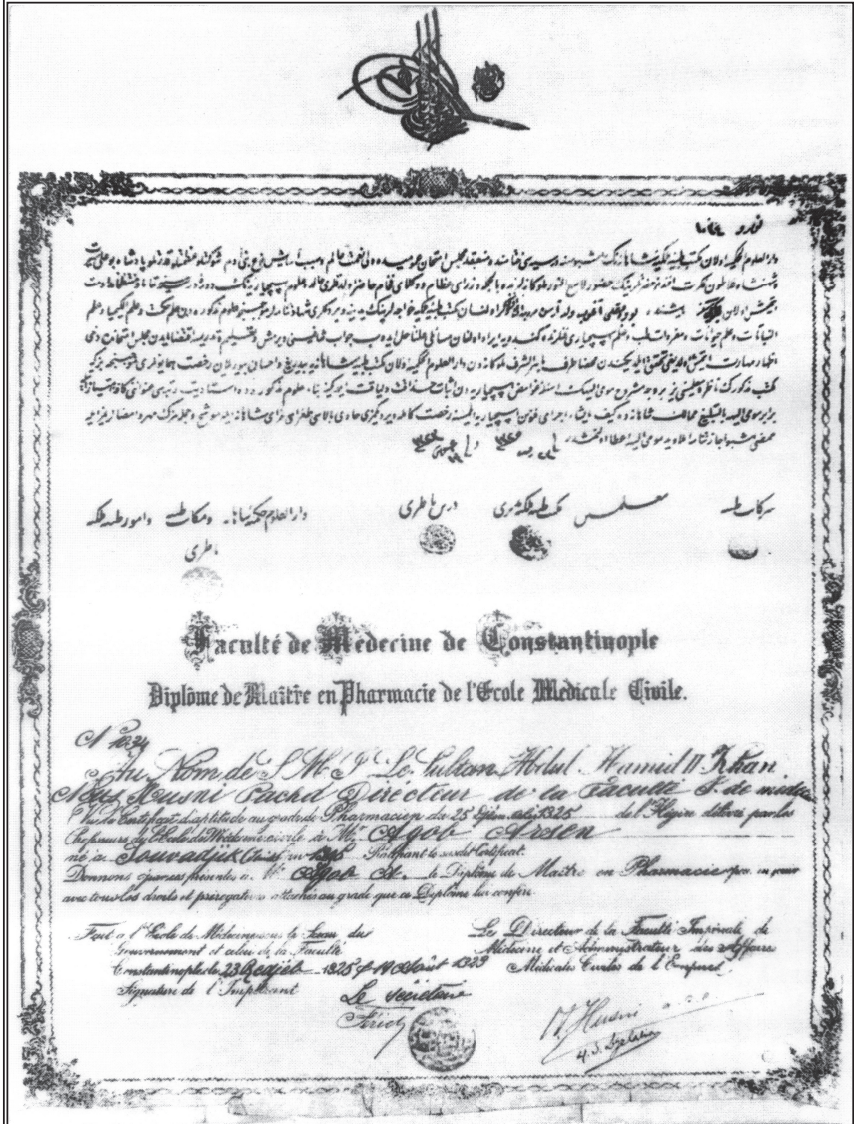
¹⁷ Two districts in the city of Istanbul (Constantinople) which were highly populated by Armenians. On July 27, 1890, Armenian Revolutionaries staged demonstrations in the Kum Kapu region. cf. Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, (Berkley and Los Angeles: 1963).

resumed his classes normally. Whereas my classmates did not have such courage; as a result my name was erased. When I returned to class and found my name had been removed from the list, it took a lot of hardship and difficulty to reestablish myself, and finally during the month of March of the same year, I managed to return to college, and regularly attended the classes of my graduating year of which only three months were left. To be able to make up for lost time and to succeed in my final exams, I had to work extremely hard day and night. In June 1907, the finals were about to start. In order to prepare myself, I was obliged to leave the pharmacy and dedicate all my time to study for my exams.

As in the previous two years, I again went to the house of my friend Hrant Etmekjian, where we isolated ourselves and studied night and day in preparation for the exams. We finally passed the exams successfully and were eligible for the Pharmacy diploma. After long years of suffering, privation, and hardship, I had managed to realize my dream. On August 9, 1907, during the celebration of the coronation of the Sultan, we, the graduating class of forty students, received our diplomas. (Pl. III). After swearing the traditional oath, I finally became a certified, qualified pharmacist. How great was my pride and satisfaction! Later, we went with some friends to a resort. All of my friends were thankful and grateful to their donors and sponsors; I alone was the self-sufficient one who had reached this stage without any outside assistance and was the product of my own hard work and suffering. I was the architect of my life and future.

Copy of Hagop Arsenian's Pharmacy Diploma from Istanbul University

August 9, 1907



Chapter Two

Adabazar

September 27, 1907 – March 1914

On August 15, 1907, I returned to Ovajik with my diploma *under my arm*,¹ and spent a few happy and carefree weeks with my family. But this brief vacation could not last long. The real struggles of life were now about to start. My concerns were no longer those of a student and his academic problems and exams, but rather how to start work, to be a productive human being and find means and efforts of earning a living. At this time, our friend, Dr. Antranig Chavouchian from Adabazar, informed me by mail that a pharmacy was for sale there. I immediately went to investigate and finally bought Ardashes Jerahian's pharmacy for 100 gold coins. I borrowed half the amount and paid him immediately, and I promised to pay the other half later in installments.

On September 25, 1907, I finally had my own pharmacy and started to work in order to be able to repay my debt of 100 gold coins. Since the pharmacy was in a remote and unattractive part of the city, I was later obliged to move it to the main street of the city. However, the first year was difficult as my work was not very successful because first, I was not a known figure in the city, and furthermore, there were ten other pharmacies there. However, the following years, between 1908 and 1910, my work prospered, my debts were paid, and I had my pharmacy working well and under control.² The pharmacy was successful because of the enlargement of my circle of friends and acquaintances

¹ Armenian saying to denote secured or guaranteed.(AAE)

² See p. 44-45 for Arsenian's Adabazar accounts.

and also due to the favorable development of the political climate, for in July 11, 1908, the Ottoman Empire's constitution decreed economic reforms which brought forth a temporary improvement.³

The time had now come to seriously think about my social life and about starting a family, and I took practical steps towards its realization.

On January 7, 1910, I became engaged to Miss Hrut Gulemerian, whom I eventually married on October 10 of the same year in Ovajik (Pl. IV). The best man was my respected teacher Father (Kahana)⁴ Arsen Harutunian, who alternately with his son Haigazoun, held our Holy Cross. As for the priest who wed us, it was again none other than Father Arsen. Afterwards, we the newlyweds with relatives and friends returned to Adabazar, where for days and weeks we received congratulations. Hence, we enjoyed the bliss of a newly founded family surrounded by my mother and my wife.

On Friday, July 29, 1912, we were blessed with the birth of our first born son whom we called Noubar Arsen according to our wish and that of our best man/godfather.(Pl. IV). During that week, as I had been reading the supplement of

³ *"The 1908 declaration of the second constitutional regime was greeted with joy. The prevailing hope and expectation was that the despotic regime had come to an end, liberty had arrived and long-awaited reforms would finally be enacted."* Akçam, Ibid., 68.

"...in fact, a brief honeymoon did take place at this time between the Young Turks and those minorities (Jews, Greeks, Armenians) who also believed that their lot might be improved if representative government were introduced." G.S. Graber, *Caravans to Oblivion, The Armenian Genocide, 1915*. (USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996), 46.

⁴ A married Armenian clergyman.

the *Puragn* weekly paper,⁵ in which the biography of Noubar Pasha⁶ was published, the origin of the word noubar was mentioned. It stated that in certain parts of Armenia, the first fruit of a tree was referred to as “noubar,” and when people tasted that fruit, they mentioned that they did “noubar.” As this was the first fruit of our family, I figured it was appropriate to call him Noubar. Upon his godfather’s wishes to add the name Arsen, we called him Noubar Arsen.

On the social level, with the opening of the Central school in Adabazar, in 1910, I was invited to serve on the School Board, and thus had a chance to serve my people in a small way.⁷ With me were the following members of the Board: Kevork Shirinian, an old honorable intellectual, Dr. M. Demirjian, Dr. H. Artinian, K. Sevkerian, Stepan Stepanian, Zareh Kolian and M. Parseghian. I continued to serve with them for two years, alongside my work. However, I had to resign in March 1914, as I decided to move my pharmacy to Izmit, believing that this move would be more beneficial to my profession.

⁵ *Puragn* was founded on July 1, 1882 by Rev. H.A. Utujian. cf. Yervant H. Kassouny, *Knnagan Desoutiun Hay Avedaranagan Badmoutiuni Oghagahuysoğh Temkerou yev Yegheloutiunnerou [1828-1892]*. (A Critical Study of Personalities and Events Encircling the History of Armenian Evangelicalism[1828-189]). (Beirut: 2009), 456.

⁶ This must have been a reference to the biography of Egyptian Armenian Minister Noubar Pasha which appeared in A.B. De Guerville, *New Egypt*. (New York: 1906).

⁷ There were 12 schools in Adabazar adjoining the four churches and the oldest school was established in 1830. See Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *Ibid.*, 136.

Hagop Arsenian's Adabazar Accounts

(Debits) (Mes créances)		
		adapazar
Stepan Azarian		40
Garabeel Jamgotchian		162-20
Erstante Papazian		246
Hagop Ualejian		49
Artaki Djebelian		127
Hassan Bey		103
Yousha eff.		125
Garabeel Pharonian		66
Hatenij Sikiyan		21
Antranij Arzouman		72
Garabeel Sapritchian		80
Yeghagan Papazian		66
Krikor Sukerian		50
Lindes Abraham		40
Boghos Maladjian		34
Zekeria		15
Ali (Hachlik) (b. s. r. t.)		25, 50
Anastas (Banque Ottoman)		59
Halie (Sinan Oghlan)		28
Chahrazar		10
Der Drizian		34

Miguir agha	40
Takvor gallichian	20
Hovhannes Seyirmingui	36
Hazaret aghpar	25
Mikie Hadigian	87
Haidi chahin Bey	66
re. Commissaire Fakia eff (biolon)	56
" Commandeur Fouad Bey	60
les polices	32
police Sabri	27
Hadji Dette publicin	20
Hagop Hmidli	18
" Stephanian	15
Archag Imassian (Souffleur)	31
tellak Miskag	52
Mestoun bey	12
Karsab arbadour	10
Armenay regie	10

Chapter Three

*Izmit*¹

March 1, 1914 – July 26, 1915

*“...It is absolutely necessary to eliminate the Armenian people in its entirety, so that there is no further Armenian on this earth and the very concept of Armenia is extinguished.”*²

(Dr. Nazim, CUP, February 1915).³

On March 1, 1914, I moved to Izmit and owing to Dr. Jerahian’s and G. Effendi Kondayan’s efforts, I opened a pharmacy on the Great Avenue of Izmit over the bridge. My work progressed very successfully, but unpleasant and unexpected events developed. With the start of the Great War, the Turkish Government declared mobilization and martial law (*sefer berlik*)⁴ and mobilized, at gunpoint, without

¹ According to Kévorkian, in *The Armenian Genocide*, 551-556, and *Extermination of Ottoman Armenians*, 11, on July 18, 1915, the order to deport Armenians from the 42 localities of the sanjak of Izmit was signed by the Minister of the Interior. Between August 6 to 9, 1915, Four thousand Armenians from Izmit are deported in three convoys to Konia. 554, “*The authorities then began methodically burning down the houses in the Armenian quarter and also the bishopric, devastating the graveyard and generally seeing to it that all traces of the Armenians’ presence in the town were wiped out.*”

² These quotations inserted at the outset of every chapter have been included by the translator to underline the authenticity of the events mentioned in Arsenian’s manuscript.

³ Dr. Nazim Bey Senâlikli, (1872-1926), CUP Chairman cf. Graber, *Ibid.*, 87-88.

⁴ *Sefer berlik* is the Turkish word used in 1914 to call for military mobilization and martial law in the Ottoman Empire. Yervant A. Odian. *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*. (London: Garod Books: 2010), 2, states that Monday, July 21 (i.e. August 3), 1914 was the first day of the mobilization; Rev. Ephraim K. Jernazian in *Judgment unto Truth* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 44, mentions that “*after Armenian soldiers were admitted into military ranks, their guns were taken away from them, and they were placed in amala tabour (work battalions). Then, being rendered defenceless, they were murdered en masse.*”

exception, all males between 18 to 45 years of age for military conscription. Alas, all my plans were about to collapse! I was to become a soldier. However, for the moment the qualified pharmacists were held in reserve, so I continued to work with a mind constantly haunted by the fear of being called up at any moment.

On Sunday, September 18, 1914, God blessed us with our second child Norair, who filled our family life with happiness.

This year's winter was spent pleasantly with other families. Father Arsen became the Principal of the Izmit Armenian School, allowing us to spend most of our free time together. There were also other close families like the Goshdoyans, the Dadourians, the Takvorians, Michael Peruvian, the Chalekians and others with whom we spent most of the time trying to minimize and alleviate the horrors of *sefer berlik*. Unfortunately, this pleasant interlude was not to last for long.

The year 1915 started with the hope of having a good and pleasant year. During the first months, we spent a lot of time with some military doctors who were in Izmit discussing the troublesome and worrisome situation. Among these doctors were Dr. Kabadayan, Dr. Maksoud Tokatlian, Dr. Hagop Balian and Dr. S. Cherakian.

At the beginning of January 1915, I had to travel to Bolis to testify in favor of our friend Hagop Ghazarian, who was sent to the war court because of a certain unfounded accusation. As a well-known citizen, I gave a favorable testimony and returned to Izmit fifteen days later.

The months of April, May and June of 1915 witnessed days of terror and fear. The Turkish Government started

the persecution of the Armenians⁵ of Turkey. From all the cities and villages, many members of well-known intellectual, trader and artisan classes were exiled to unknown destinations.⁶ Similarly, some 10-15 people of Izmit⁷ were

⁵ The Turks formed a Special Organization called *Teshkilâ-ti Mahsusa* to plan and execute the extermination of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. See Akçam, Ibid., 93-97 and Vahakn Dadrian, "The Role of the Special Organisation in the Armenian Genocide during the First World War." *Minorities in Wartime*, ed. Panikos Panayi, (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1993), 54; See also Appendix I.

⁶ On April 24, 1915, hundreds of Armenian intellectuals were arrested, hanged or deported from Istanbul and its suburbs. According to Father Grigoris Balakian, who was among the exiled to Chankiri, the train carrying them passed through Nicomedia on the evening of April 24 and through Izmit station without stopping. *Armenian Golgotha*, Translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2009), 61

⁷ American Documents concerning Izmit as cited by Ara Sarafian in *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*. Compiled by Ara Sarafian, (Princeton and London, Gomidas Institute, 2004)

- a. Letter of Henry Morgenthau, US Ambassador to Turkey, to Secretary of State (July 10, 1915) transmitting ARF (Dashnakzoutiun Report) dated Sofia, June 5, 1915, Sarafian, Ibid., Source: NA/RG59/867.4016/95, 94: "*The state of affairs outside Constantinople is worse. At Adrianople they have deported or imprisoned 180 Armenians, at Ismid 30 or 40*".
- b. Telegram sent by Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Washington on August 11, 1915 states that the "*Armenian population is fast being swept from the Ada Bazar and Ismit*," Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/90, 77.
- c. Kaiserlich Deutsche Botschaft, German Embassy, Washington D.C., informing Secretary of State Robert Lansing about a copy of the memorandum handed to the Imperial Ottoman Government by the German ambassador. (Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/173, 223. The German embassy informs the Sublime Porte of the events concerning the banishment of the Armenian inhabitants of the Anatolian provinces and regrets "*that incidents of that character instead of being prevented by the local authorities have regularly occurred upon the expulsion of the Armenians so that most of them perished even before reaching their destination....the Ottoman Imperial Government saw fit to extend the banishment order to the other provinces of Asia Minor and quite recently the Armenian Villages of the Ismid district were emptied of their inhabitants under like conditions*."
- d. Letter of American Consular agent in Damascus, Greg Young to Ambassador Morgenthau (Sept. 20, 1915). "*From a person who has passed that way I am told that so far as he could judge all Armenians south of Ismid were being exiled, and from the same informant whose word cannot be questioned, I learn that thousands of Armenians were passed by him on the road*. Sarafian, Ibid., 298.

unexpectedly deported. And I, every hour and every day, waited with my suitcase for the orders of my own deportation.

However, these terrible days passed and I remained in Izmit running my pharmacy and naïvely content that I had been exempted from such an ordeal. Little did I know or even suspect that a greater tragedy would be in store for us. For the events that we witnessed, the systematically designed and preplanned deportations, were to become the first collective scheme perpetuated against all humanitarian principles yet to be recorded in history.⁸

Turkey, allying with Germany and Austria-Hungary, had already declared war against Russia, France, England and Serbia. Later Bulgaria joined in as well on the side of Turkey. Violent attacks took place on the frontiers of the Dardanelles, the Caucasus and Suez. During the first months of 1915, after the Turkish *Ittihadî* government⁹ lost thousands of victims in the Dardanelles,¹⁰ but having defeated the British, it believed that the final victory would be theirs, since its ally Germany was also scoring great victories on the French front. Therefore, it considered the time ripe and appropriate to exterminate its Armenian population.

Who was going to hold Turkey accountable? And who was going to ask questions to the victorious party after Turkey won the war? In this manner the Armenians would

⁸ Fisk, *Ibid.*, 388-436, describes it as "*The First Holocaust*."

⁹ The *Ittihadî* Government in reference to the ruling party of Turkey *Ittihat ve Terakkî Cemiyeti* (CUP: Committee of Union and Progress) which in 1889, was established by cadets in the Ottoman military school. Zürcher, *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁰ Fisk, *Ibid.*, 393, states that "*Encouraged by their victory over the Allies at the Dardanelles, the Turks fell upon the Armenians with the same fury as the Nazis were to turn upon the Jews of Europe two decades later.*"

be exterminated and no one would notice this “cleansing” during wartime. Henceforth, the Armenians would never become an obstacle to the Turks and their dreams. This is how Enver Pasha¹¹ and his monstrous clique thought. But to achieve these infernal plans, they first had to start nurturing anti-Armenian sentiments and revengeful feelings among the Turkish population. They proceeded with this plan in the remotest villages by announcing that the Armenians, allied with the Russians, were cutting off all the Turkish resources and advances in the Van region¹² and imposing hardship on the Muslim population. They said, “as a result, we can no longer trust these people and we need to deport them and remove them as far away from our frontiers as possible because they are dangerous. We should uproot them and send them to the Deir Zor desert.” To this effect, numerous instructions were sent everywhere to exterminate the Armenians. This was the time for their salvation, they said, and the opportunity should not be missed.

To spread this propaganda, Enver, Tala’at and their criminal clique sent monsters in the guise of human beings to instigate Turkish sentiments against the Armenians. We later found out from some naïve, conscientious Turks that many months prior to the deportations, the mosques were used to coerce the Turks to take oaths and promise that they would not reveal these secret plans

¹¹ The Three leading members of the CUP, known as the Triumvirate, see Introduction p.4; See also Dadrian, *Ibid.*, 64-67; Zürcher, *Ibid.*, 362. According to Akçam, *Ibid.*, 10, “*the CUP... was responsible for the Genocide*”.

¹² Vahakn Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide, Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*. (New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.): Transaction Publishers, 1999), 67-68.

to the Armenians.¹³ It was rumored that anyone who revealed these plans should consider himself divorced from his wife as this was the greatest oath binding them. And thus began the massive terror campaign against the Armenians.

During the months of April, May and June, the partial deportations started from Bolis and the suburbs. Notable traders, prominent businessmen and intellectuals were dragged without any questioning from their beds in the middle of the night, arrested and deported to the depths of Konia and Ankara. The Turks probably thought that by removing the heads and the intelligentsia, they would crush the rebellious spirit of the Armenians. In addition, to implement their plans, yet another problem had to be resolved: the matter of arms.¹⁴ The Turkish monsters of that time thought that we Armenians were armed and that we would hinder their military advance and obstruct their plans. Based on these misconceptions, they proceeded to send monsters to the suburbs, as was the case of Izmit during the first weeks of July 1915, when we personally witnessed the horrors and tragedies of our town. Under the pretext of collecting arms

¹³ The mosques and the Friday prayers were often used as a platform to instigate the mobs against the Armenians as mentioned in the numerous memoirs of survivors. cf. Vahram Dadrian, *To the Desert: Pages from My Diary*, Ara Sarafian, ed. (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2003), 172; also fatwas [religious orders similar to Christian bulls] were decreed by the religious heads, considering the “cleansing” *paklayalum* of Armenian Infidels (*giavours*) as a form of jihad rewarded in Paradise, see G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 144-146.

¹⁴ Jacques Der Alexanian, in *Le Ciel était noir sur l'Euphrate: La tragique histoire des Arméniens*, (Paris: Edition Laffont, 1988), 64, mentions that often the Turkish soldiers would themselves hide the arms and pretend to have found them later.

and finding bombs, the monster called *Chette-bashi* Ibrahim¹⁵ was sent first to Adabazar,¹⁶ then to Bardizag, Ovajik, Arslanbeg, Deongel, Armash and finally Izmit. Hundreds of Armenians were gathered in the churches¹⁷ and the schools, and indiscriminately beaten until their feet bled and they lay on the ground invoking God. “I am your Allah,” he shouted, “bring up the arms and we will reserve places for you in Deir Zor and Mosul.” This was his refrain. We all shivered, terrified and anticipated, like a Damocletian sword hanging over us, that greater tragedies were yet to come. We did not even dare talk to each other, but hoped only to escape this horrible fate.

Our old prelate, Father Stepanos¹⁸ sent detailed reports

¹⁵ Leader of *Chettes* which were irregular fighting bands and organized killing squads, cf. Grigoris Balakian, *Ibid.*, 437; Nartouni, *Ibid.*, 167, mentions the Chette Ibrahim Tali who had sealed the Church in Armash (Nicomedia) in early August, 1915; Odian, *Ibid.*, 54-56, mentions in his memoirs that it was a nightmare to stop at Izmit since there was Cheteji bashi Ibrahim there who had tortured all the well known Armenians of Bardizag, Izmit and Adabazar, and everywhere stories were told about his savagery; also Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 553, mentions the following event between July 18-19, 1915; in Arslanbeg (Province of Izmit): “*The Armenian village is surrounded by 200 soldiers and gendarmes under the direction of a Commander of the Gendarmerie, Ibrahim Bey. The following morning the deportations begin while the village is pillaged by Çerkez thugs linked to the Special Organization. Over 2,000 people are deported via Eskişehir, Konya, and Bozanti, and are then dispersed to Rakka, Meskene, Der el-Zor, Mosul, or Baghdad.*”

¹⁶ Hrant Sarian mentions the arrival of Ibrahim Bey, head of the Constantinople prisons, in Adabazar and the torturing of the people in the St. Garabed Church in “*Recits de Hrant Sarian parus dans le journal Haratch de Paris: 1915 – 1922*”. Translated by Louise Kiffer (Sarian) <http://www.imprescriptible.fr/dossiers/temoins/sarian>. (December 2010)

¹⁷ Kévorkian, *Ibid.*, 553, also mentions Ibrahim Bey visiting notables in the churches of Holy Archangels and St. Garabed in Adabazar.

¹⁸ Father Stepanos Hovagimian, Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Izmit.

every day to the Patriarchate in Istanbul,¹⁹ describing the injustices that were taking place. But of what use? Since the orders were from the Central Government, all protests and appeals were ineffective. There was no hope of assistance even from foreign circles.²⁰ (Appendix I).

Finally our great tragedy started with the uprooting of the Armenian population of Geyve,²¹ in the suburb of Izmit, between July 15 and 20. Between the 20th and the 22nd of the same month, the same occurred in Adabazar, Arslanbeg, and Ovajik, where the poor Armenians were forced to leave their lands, their businesses, farms, groves and the *fruit of their sweat*, to be driven away to unknown lands, to insecurity, under extreme pressure and duress. Izmit and Bardizag had still not received instructions to begin their torturous trail.

The Turks immediately spread the rumor that because Izmit was a central city, the Armenians would remain there and should not be deported. This was also schemed so that Armenians would not take steps to sell their properties and furniture in advance; then when the orders came for deportation, the Armenians would have no time to sell anything, and the Turks would appropriate everything for free. However, we never believed these rumors, and knew that our death sentence was imminent. Sure enough, on Friday evening July 24, the Armenian Prelacy received orders from the local authorities that the Armenians of Izmit would have to leave within 24 hours, without any

¹⁹ The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople in 1915 was Archbishop Zaven Der Yeghiayan (1868-1947). These tragic events of 1915 are recorded in his Memoirs *Badryarkagan Housheres*, (My Patriarchal Memoirs), (Cairo: 1947).

²⁰ Ghazarian, *Ibid.*, 214, mentions that the orders of the Mutasarrif of Izmit came directly from the Ministry of Interior, *i.e.* from Tala'at Pasha.

²¹ Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 555.

exception.²² No appeals, protests, permissions or any kind of petitions would be tolerated.

It is impossible to describe the fear and terror that filled the Izmit population. On Saturday, July 25, all the goods and furniture of the Armenians were displayed on the sidewalks for sale. But who was going to buy? All of them knew that they would be able to lay their hands on these items for free the next day, without paying a piaster.²³ Some of the Turks, out of pity, offered to buy some items for one tenth of the price of the object. Poor Armenians, our lifetime achievements and investments were in one day left to the full enjoyment of the Turks.

That day, I was totally confused and lost, and did not know what to do after years of suffering and sacrifice to reach where I was. In a state of despair, and leaving the household matters to my wife, I rushed downtown, and like a demented man tried to deal with the matters of my pharmacy, which for years I had taken care of with love and devotion. Was I going to leave my life's purpose and investment to the Turks to enjoy? Selling it was impossible. Who was going to buy it? As the only solution, I resorted to the only Turkish pharmacist in the city who offered without any qualms to buy it for a mere 20 gold coins. At first I was so outraged that I refused his offer and returned home. However, after

²² According to the German pastor, Johannes Lepsius, *Deutschland und Armenien: Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstuecken* (Germany and Armenia: A Collection of the Diplomatic Documents) (Bremen: Donat & Temmen, 1986), xxv, the deportations from Izmit, Brousa and Adabazar took place between August 12-19, 1915. Arsenian pushes this date back to the end of July, unless the difference is again due to the 13 days of difference between the Gregorian and Julian calendars.

²³ All the Armenian properties were eventually confiscated by the Turkish Government. See Baghdjian, *The Confiscation of Armenian Properties by the Turkish Government Said to be Abandoned*. (2010).

much thought, I decided to accept the offer to give up the pharmacy for 20 gold coins, since we were heading towards the unknown and would be in great need of cash. I handed my keys to the Turkish pharmacist and completely downcast, depressed and sad, I returned home.

Already, the same evening of that fateful Saturday, many Armenian families, together with the Prelate, were brought forth to the stations to be deported. The latter considered himself the shepherd of the people, and did not wish to be separated from them.²⁴

That evening I went to the station myself to send a telegram to the Patriarch, signed by the Prelate, stating in Turkish that he was leaving with the people. He had also added good wishes and long life to the Sultan in the hope that if the Patriarch shared this document with the concerned authorities, they might regret their decisions and ask the Sultan to change his mind and revoke his decision of our exile.

I handed the telegram to the officer and paid 50 piasters for it from my own personal account. Ironically, as the first words of the cable were being sent, the train carrying the first caravan of the Armenians deported from Izmit whistled and sped past by me.

Afterwards, for the last time in my life, I passed by my pharmacy only to find the door open and the whole place dismantled and in a mess. For the shameless pharmacist had transported all the medicines before even paying me the 20 gold coins which he had promised me. When I confronted

²⁴ G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 267, recounts meeting, in April 1916, the Soghomonian family of Bardizag in Ayran-Baghche, next to Intilly. They recounted to him how their prelate, Father Stepanos, had refused to be exempted from Deportation and had accompanied his flock all the way to Aleppo.

him, he instead suggested only 10 gold coins in return for the Deeds of the Pharmacy. It was impossible to describe my fury and feelings. But what could I do? I had no other choice but to agree.

DEPORTATION²⁵

July 26, 1915 - Sunday night. We waited in the station for the train to move. It was only this morning that we were pushed out of our homes by the *gendarmes*, leaving behind most of our furniture²⁶ and taking only a few mattresses and personal belongings. They were in a hurry, waiting for us to hand them the key, while we, helpless as we were, could neither resist nor protest. Just like sheep led to the slaughterhouse,²⁷ my wife Hrout, my two sons

²⁵ Arsenian used the word deportation, exile, massacre, but not genocide since the word was not coined until 1944 when Raphael Lemkin used it for the first time in print in his work, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, 1944), 79-95.

²⁶ Rev. Arthur C. Ryan from Constantinople reports in "*Turkish Atrocities: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1917*", compiled by James L. Barton, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Gomidas Institute, 1998), 183: "*Between October 6th and November 20th, it was necessary for me to be in Ismid on several occasions. In Ismid I saw the empty shops in the market and the ruins of some five hundred houses where the Armenians had lived before their deportation. This district had been set on fire and burned so as to prevent any Armenians from reoccupying the houses.*"

²⁷ Leslie A. Davis describes the massacres of the region of Harput as a slaughterhouse in *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*. Blair, Susan (ed.) (NY: Arstide D. Caratzas, 1989); whereas Aurora Mardiganian in *Ravished Armenia* (New York: Fawcett, 1990, Originally Published: New York, 1918), 82, refers to the *gendarmes* (*zaptiehs*), as the *Kasab Tabour* or the butcher regiment.

Noubar and Norair, and my old mother went to the station and there, under the scorching sun, we waited all day long for an empty wagon.

Almost half of Izmit²⁸ was gathered there filled with fear and anger. The people started pushing each other and acting disrespectfully towards each other. My poor people, even on our way to the slaughterhouse we were impatient and in a rush! We were told that we were leaving for Konia²⁹ and, therefore, each one of us had to pay 180 piasters for the train ticket. They were transporting us to our graves with our own money.³⁰ What an unfair and unjust government this was! A few days ago they (the Turks) concocted new ways to steal our money. They promised not to displace us in exchange for amounts paid. The fees were as follows: from Bardizag, 400 Turkish pounds; from Ovajik, 300;

²⁸ In the Ten Commandments of the CUP, item 6 mentions: "*in places as Adana, Sivas, Broussa, Ismidt and Smyrna, let the military disciplinary forces (gendarmerie) actively help the Moslems with military force*" cf. Vahakn N. Dadrian, "The Secret Young Turk Ittihadist Conference and the Decision for the World War I Genocide of the Armenians in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* № 7: 2 Fall 1993: 173-174.

²⁹ Kaiser, *The Baghdad Railway*, 75, mentions that trains were first directed to Konia and from there sent to other places in the south especially to the Deir Zor Desert.

³⁰ James Bryce and Arnold J. Toynbee in *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*. Ed. Ara Sarafian. (Princeton: New Jersey: Gomidas Institute, 2000), Document 109, 438, mentions the testimony of Dr. William S. Dodd, a physician from Konia: "...the exiles were compelled to pay the full fare and then packed forty or fifty together in box-trucks, cattle-trucks or even open flat trucks. The Railway seems to be as conscienceless in wringing the money out of them as the Government or the Turks."

and from Deongel, 100.³¹ The poor peasants, believing their words, tried to secure the amounts, some even through the exchange of their personal jewelry. Alas, two days later they were removed by force. First they were robbed and then they were deported. This was the criminal agenda of Enver and his gangster clique which bore the name of government. After we had secured the 180 piastres for the ticket per person, we settled, all of us, in one wagon together, never parting from each other. Father Arsen with his family, Stepan Agha³² Zakarian with his family, the Dadourians, the Bodourians from Izmit³³ and another friendly family from Adabazar.

Finally at midnight of that fateful day of July 26, 1915, the train, with all of us crammed in one wagon, started moving from Izmit station. The Armenian quarter of Izmit was in the dark that night without any trace of movement, whereas the wagons of the trains were packed with thousands of unfortunate Armenians. Everywhere we could hear the outburst and sad voices of people's complaints and suffering. Until then, I tried to control myself and keep my composure, but when the train passed in front of my pharmacy, I could no longer hold my tears and started crying like a little boy. Thus we

³¹ Letter of Ambassador Morgenthau to Secretary of State (August 10, 1915) transmitting ARF (Daschnakzoutiun) Report dated Sofia, August 20/2, 1915. Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/122, 162: "*Persecutions in the sandjak of Ismidt. Persecutions accompanied by horrible tortures have taken place in the Armenian village of Bahtcédjik or Bardizag (2,000 families), where about one hundred personalities were cruelly ill-treated in the school and the archbishopric; in Ovadjik (600 families)...in the towns of Ada Bazar (1,000 families) and of Ismidt, etc...The village of Duenguel must pay 100 Ltq., Ovadjik 300 Ltq. etc. The inhabitants of Adabazar have been given the order to leave their houses within four days.*" (Ltq=Lira Turkish)

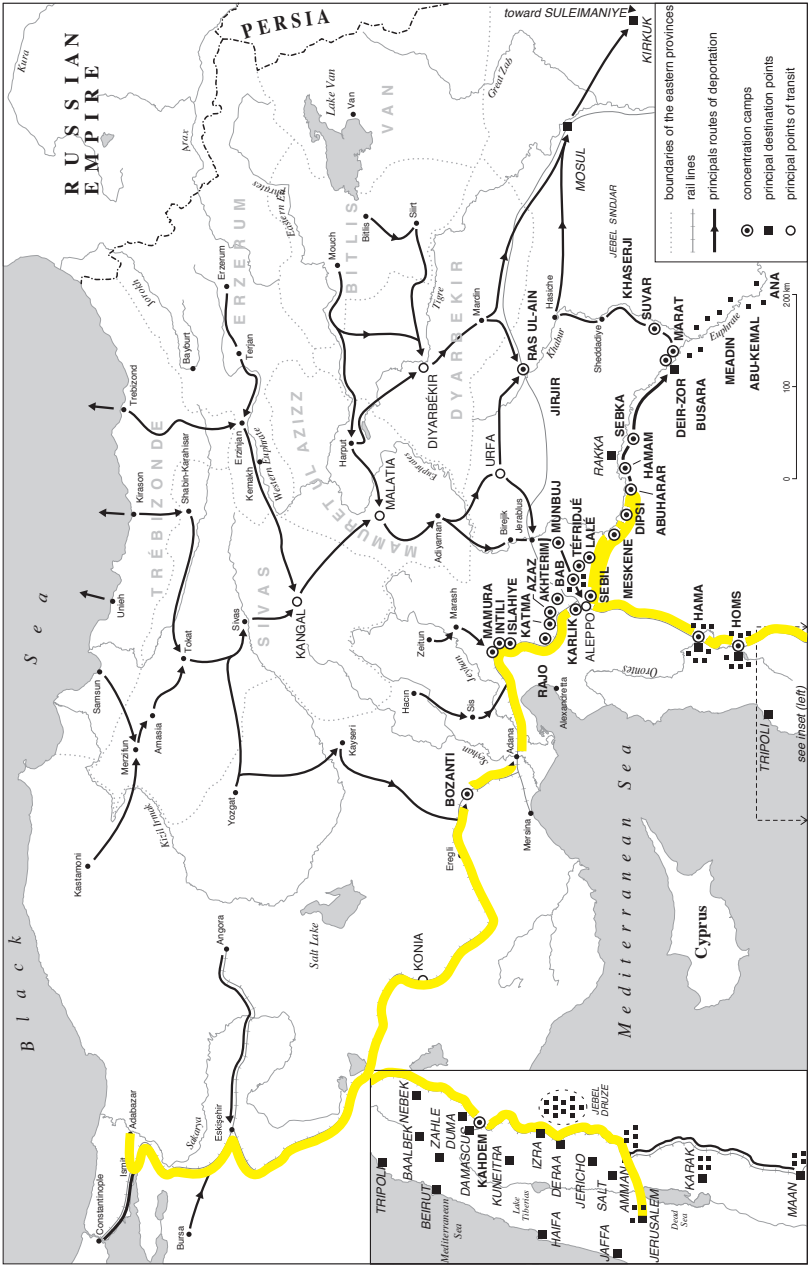
³² Turkish title for honorable Gentleman.(AAE)

³³ Odian, Ibid., 75, mentions meeting Karnig Bodourian, a teacher from Bardizag at Giuleg station.

departed from our dear Izmit and Ovajik without a single trace of hope to return.³⁴

³⁴ After the deportations of the Armenians from Izmit, the entire Armenian quarter was put to fire. Odian, *Ibid.*, 55, 304, describes seeing the ruins of the city from the train in September, 1915, and upon his return from exile in 1918, he remarks that the burnt Armenian quarter of the city was as deserted as it was three years earlier. Some of the Izmit inhabitants who had returned were devastated to find their homes stripped off of their tiles, glass, shutters and even staircases.

Map 3 - Hagop Arsenian's Deportation Route



(Based on Map courtesy of Raymond H. Kévorkian)

Chapter Four

*Izmit-Konia*¹

July 28 – 30, 1915

“Almost all the railway stations became detention camps where thousands died. Beside the railway station in Konya, a large concentration camp had been established. It was one of a series which extended along the railway to the Syrian desert. Deported Armenians remained in these camps until they were sent to the next stop along this eastward path...”

Hilmar Kaiser *The Baghdad Railway and the Armenian Genocide*, 75.

The train which left Izmit on Sunday night arrived the next morning Monday, July 27, at the Arifieh station, where thousands of the displaced population of Adabazar

¹ William S. Dodd from the American Hospital at Konia writes to Ambassador Morgenthau on August 15, 1915: *“More than a week ago the Armenians driven out from Ada-Bazar and its region began to arrive here, they came by hundreds on train after train. They had been compelled to pay the railway fare 180 piasters for each person, and they were packed into box-cars forty to forty-five in a car, men, women, and children, sick and well, for the journey that took four or five days.”* in Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867. 4016/137, 192.

Previously, Dr. Wilfred M. Post, an American physician at the American Hospital at Konia, had also described on September 15, 1915, the conditions of the Armenian subjects, cf. Sarafian, Ibid., Source: NA/RG59/867.4016/188, 248: *“There are at present at Konia about 5-10,000 Armenian refugees mostly from the Broussa, Izmid and Bardezag regions; a few hundreds come from Eskishehir, Akshehir and other places nearer by. The people are for the most part encamped in the fields near the railroad station... The protection is for the most part very flimsy and there is a considerable proportion of the people whose things have been stolen from them and who are simply lying out in the open with no protection from the scorching sun by day or the dew and dampness by night. This state of affairs produces a vast number of cases of malaria and dysentery and also of heat prostration, and one cannot walk a few paces through the camp without seeing sick lying everywhere, especially children. There are of course no sanitary arrangements at all and last night the stench that came from the camp was overpowering.”*

(*Adabazartsis*) had been waiting for the past three days.² We, however, continued towards our unknown destination. How long and terrifying were these moments when we reached the Veshir Khan station where a train transporting new Kurd and Arab recruits was waiting. They shouted and cursed us through their windows and behaved in a disrespectful manner towards us, even threw stones at us. Some even made gestures to indicate to us that we were on our way to get massacred. What a deadly feeling it gave us and we were convinced that we were on our way to certain death. I tried to act calm and keep my self-control, but I knew that all of us were in a deplorable state.

When we stopped at the Bilejik station, I decided to go down to buy a few things, but I was so scared and terrified that my legs started shaking, and without buying anything, I quickly returned to the wagon in a totally depressed and frustrated state.

On July 28, we reached Eskishehir³ before dawn. Around the station, thousands of displaced people coming from different territories were in tents. We were not allowed to

² Hilmar Kaiser, *The Baghdad Railway*, 75, mentions: "On October 9 and 10, 1915, the authorities at Konia reported that 11,000 Armenians who had been concentrated there had been sent south. Between October 13 and 16, 9,600 Armenians followed... During the following three days, 5,000 Armenians were sent from Konia and 4,854 during the next two days. When deportation by rail was interrupted because of military needs, the people were marched off along the railway track. On October 23, however, 1,050 Armenians were again packed into fourteen cars from Konia."

³ Dr. William M. Post, an American Physician at the American hospital in Konia reports to Ambassador Morgenthau on September 3, 1915: 'At Eskishehir there are about 12-15,000 exiles in the fields about the station, evidently in great need and distress. The majority of them appear to be without shelter and what shelter they have consists of the flimsiest kind of tent improvised out of a few sticks covered with rugs or carpets in a few instances but often with only cotton cloth absolutely no protection from the heavy autumn rains which will soon be coming', in Sarafian, *Ibid.*, Source: NA/RG59/867.4016/188, 246.

get off the train and we spent the time aimlessly until that same evening we reached Konia.⁴ We put up a tent that evening under which four to five families settled, sitting almost knee to knee, and spent a terrifying night.

On July 29, Thursday morning, at daybreak, policemen came and told us that we should sell all our belongings here, since from Bozanti onwards we were not going to have either trains or carts to transport our personal effects, and we would be forced to throw away all our belongings. They added that we were going to walk all the way to Deir Zor.⁵ At that moment, you can imagine our psychological state, *the storm which was brewing in our brains*⁶ and our hopelessness. There was no doubt; we were on our way to the slaughterhouse. We started selling everything, that is, whenever we could find a buyer. Afterwards we sat in a tramway and went to the market in Konia with Krikor Dadourian to buy some food. Of course, food was going to be our main obsession and worry until our last breath.

⁴ Daschnakzoutiun Committee, Balkan Section, Bucharest, report, № 7, Oct. 28, 1915 states, *"Afion Kara Hissar (October 2/15 Résumé). The 16,000 deported Armenians who were living in the tents have been sent to Konia in cars used for the transportation of animals. At night while thousands of these unfortunate people, without food or shelter, shiver with cold, those brutes who are supposed to be their guardians attack them with clubs and push them towards the station. Women, children and old men are packed together in the cars...Their shouts are heartbreaking, but everything is in vain. Hunger, cold and fatigue together with the violence of the government will soon achieve the extermination of this last remnant of the Armenian people composed of the inhabitants of the caza of Ismidt, of the vilayet of Broussa and environments"* in Sarafian, Ibid., Source, NA/RG59/867.4016/226, 341.

⁵ Wilfred M. Post, American physician at Konia writes to Morgenthau on November 25, 1915: *"People coming from that region say that not one person in ten ever reached [Deir] Zor and that these people who have gotten there have nothing but starvation before them. From statements of railroad officials and others, I should think not less than 500,000 people have passed through Bozanti"* in Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/251, 396.

⁶ An Armenian expression to denote worry and anxiety. (AAE)

In Konia, we entered a pharmacy belonging to a certain Suleiman Assaf, a very cooperative and understanding person who after listening to our stories said: “*The country is in the hands of three criminals; May Allah have Mercy on Us.*”⁷ Then he requested that we stay a few days in Konia and promised to recommend us to the hotel owner, Aughostos Agha,⁸ so that he would give us a room at the hotel.

We moved to the hotel where a small place was given to the women, a room to me and the priest, and another room to the Dadourians. We had hardly rested when at midnight policemen came and ordered us to leave immediately. We pleaded with them that we had just arrived and we had some sick people with us; after a while they softened and allowed us to stay until morning. But how was it possible to sleep now when terrible thoughts were already invading our minds. Images of torture, death, massacre and famine were all vivid in our thoughts. It was impossible to sleep - we were obsessed by our *via dolorosa*, the road to Golgotha⁹ - to death, to the graveyard.

Finally, on the morning of July 30, some of our friends decided to go to Karaman¹⁰ to rest. I refused to leave with them and decided to stay a few more days in Konia and meet once again with the pharmacist. However, I could not find

⁷ Almost identical words were uttered by a Turk to Father G. Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha*, 183, stating that “*there hasn’t been a misfortune that they (Tala’at and Enver) haven’t brought upon this poor nation*”...

⁸ Odian, *Ibid.*, 298, of the Constantinople *Jamanak* newspaper mentions staying at the Avstos (Aughostos?) Hotel in Konia.

⁹ Many of the survivors compare their tragic march to Deir Zor to Christ’s way of the cross or march to Golgotha. cf. G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, Yeranouhi Simonian, *Im Goghgotas* (My Golgotha), (Beirut: Armenian Catholicosate of Antelias, 1960); Vahram Dadrian, *Ibid.*, 55; K. Der Sarkiss, *Journey to the Light*, (1969), 35.

¹⁰ A railway stop between Konia and Eregli (see Map 3).

him because of the *Bayram*.¹¹ As I was leaving the pharmacy with uncertainty and total hopelessness, I came across a nice Armenian young man, called Hovhannes Kazanjian, who kindly took us to the Armenian Quarter and the Church and then invited us to his home. Until then, the Armenians of Konia had not been deported.¹²

Afterwards we returned to the station and put all our belongings in one wagon, but it was so crowded that not only could I not sit comfortably, but there was not even a proper standing room for me. I left the wagon and decided to move into an adjoining one, but even that was too crowded. I finally moved to the aisles and sat on the stairs of the train using a metal piece as pillow and tried to sleep. I was so physically exhausted from the day's events that the sounds and whistle of the train were mixed with horrible pictures of deportation. When the train slowed down, I thought that we had reached Karaman, so I immediately got off the train waiting for my family to alight, only to realize that the doors closed again and the train started moving. I quickly jumped back foolishly and could hardly hang on to one of the train doors. I was frightened and worried. For a moment I thought that we had already passed Karaman and that I had been separated from my loved ones for good.

¹¹ A Muslim feast.

¹² According to Hagop A. Seropian, a resident of Konia, the deportation orders reached the Armenians of Konia on August 16, 1915. *Yegherni Houcheres: Hagop A. Seropian, (My Genocide Memoirs: Hagop A. Seropian)*, ed. Antranig Dakessian, (Beirut: Photogravure Paklayan, 2005), 26.

Chapter Five

*Karaman*¹

July 30 – August 12, 1915

“All along the railway line from Konia to Karaman, Eregli and Bozanti (the rail head), hundreds of thousands of Armenians were herded along with the gendarmes. Tired and hungry, they begged bread from the passengers and the railway officials.”

(Anonymous letter dated 2nd / 15th October, 1915)²

After a while I heard one of the conductors announce Karaman and I finally reunited with my family. We put up a tent to rest a bit. However, hardly had fifteen minutes elapsed when the soldiers came and ordered us to move elsewhere immediately. There was no use arguing or protesting since they held whips in their hands and were ready to beat anybody who would do so. They were in fact merely waiting for a small provocation to accuse us of disobedience. So we dismantled our tents and in sweat moved elsewhere and pitched our tent again. Already it was dawn and we could see that the whole population of Izmit and its environs had settled in the encampment amid a sea of sand and dust. Some suffered from eye problems. It was impossible not to despair from that situation as some of the people had already resorted to begging.

July 31, 1915, Friday morning. We were both spectators and actors of this tent community. The scorching heat was unbearable, the dust beyond description. The heartless *gendarmes* did not allow us to take a short walk in the spacious open fields some distance away from the dense

¹ Railway Station after Konia. (See Map 3).

² Bryce and Toynbee, *Ibid.*, Document 113, 450.

tent settlement or in the gardens of the railway station. We remained in that hellish environment until evening and complied to their orders simply to avoid being beaten up by the soldiers.

For one week, we remained in these tents and our lives became unbearable in the August heat and the dust that was everywhere. We were denied even the shades of the nearby trees or the fresh spring waters, and the conscienceless soldiers heartlessly beat up any person they met attempting to cool down. I, for some moments, managed to escape from the soldiers' ring of supervision and ran all the way to the town of Karaman which is about half an hour away. I managed to buy lamb's meat for two and a half piasters and some kilos of *burghul*³ and return to our hell.

A little distance from the tents I was just about to sit next to the spring water and wash away the dust, when the soldiers started shouting, "It is forbidden," and beat me with their bayonets and clubs. Any complaint would have provoked more of their beastly anger, so I succumbed to my fate in total silence and calm. I returned to my tent reflecting, what we are going through is only a scene of what the Armenians have been through in their long history of suffering, but the difference is that in this particular one, I am both a witness and a victim. Blessed are those who will be able to survive and see the happy dawn of freedom.

On Sunday morning, August 2, 1915, we heard from an *Arslanbegtsi*, (a citizen of Arslanbeg) about the death of one of our friends, old Seropian, in a nearby tent. I wished to attend his funeral and go all the way to the cemetery, but the soldiers would not allow it, and I was forced to spend the whole day in my hot hellish tent. On Monday, August

³ Crushed wheat. (AAE)

3, the permissions and conditions became even stricter. We were not allowed to go to town to buy bread or get water, and many times the people around the spring would shout “water, water” but there was no response. Around evening, we were allowed to get a few drops but that was all.

On Tuesday, August 4, the weather became extremely hot and the shortage of water continued. There was a well nearby, but the inhuman soldiers denied us access and beat us. We again returned with drooping heads. The next day we managed to sneak stealthily out of the camp and reach the town of Karaman to buy a few things, since rumors were circulating that we would soon be transferred to Bozanti and I wanted to buy a lamp as soon as possible. But the local Turkish merchants informed us that all the Armenians had left and there was no one else to make lamps anymore. The news that after Bozanti our journey would be long and strenuous was already leading us into despair and filling us with fear and awe.

At night, my mother-in-law suddenly entered the tent, coming on the train returning from Eregli. She told us to move there since the situation in Eregli was more bearable than Karaman. However, we rejected her suggestion, as we thought that all this had been a big mistake and the Turkish Government would soon allow us to return to our homes. What childish and naïve mentality we had, for we still had not realized that this was an irrevocable criminal decision to eradicate all the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire.

On Thursday, August 6, 1915, the soldiers and *gendarmes* forced us to prepare and head towards the railway station. As they started tearing down the tents, we began dismantling ours and pretended that we were moving. We still did not have our own private tent and all of us had taken shelter in the large tent of Stepan Agha Zakarian with four other

families. We purposely took our time and lingered, thinking that the wagons would not be able to accommodate all of us on the train, and some of us would be forced to stay until the next day. At that moment the soldiers came and said that the Protestant Armenians must stay behind and the others leave. We were relieved and hoped that this was a break-through in politics and, filled with hope, we pitched our tents.

However, the situation on the next day grew worse, and we became witness to horrible situations: beatings, no water, no moving around, no shelter in the shade. On that Saturday morning, August 8, 1915, the soldiers came and ripped and tore down all our tents, beating up everybody including the families of the military officers and the Protestants who were asked to stay behind. Still beating us, they moved us to a nearby fenced garden owned by an Armenian landlord, Garabed Balekjian, from Karaman. We all rejoiced for a while thinking that the new place would be better. Just around noon, carrying all our possessions and *sweating blood*, we moved to that garden. Around three or four thousand people were resettled and we put up the tents again.

At this stage, I bought myself a private tent and moved with the whole tent community to the garden. The soldiers closed the garden gate and broke all our ties with the outside world. No bread and water were available, and the only well in the garden was completely dry in a few hours. A few hours later, thousands of people started shouting for bread and water. Even the hardest people were collapsing and falling apart. But to whom were we to complain? It seemed God was also an accomplice to this tragedy.

Sunday, August 9, 1915. Our life became unbearable. The armed soldiers standing in front of the tents would forbid us to circulate in that big garden and even prevented us from responding to nature's calls. In a space of 10-15 meters, they

forced men, women, adults and children to sit together. Woe to any one who dared to get out of those bounds for they would instantly become prey to the *gendarmes'* guns and the butts of their bayonets, and would be forced to return to their original places. Filled with shame, we were even denied the most basic rights of dignity and self-respect.

With great difficulty, I successfully managed to sneak out of the garden and go to town to get some food. Upon my return, I found out that the Armenians of Konia and Karaman had, in the meantime, also been displaced and had joined our ranks.

On August 10, Monday morning, the police and *gendarmes* suddenly came to visit every tent, collecting money to buy train tickets for us to be transported to Eregli. Those who did not have any money, were beaten with whips and forced to find means of ensuring the amount by borrowing from others and paying the fees. Of course there were neither tickets nor registration; they had come to officially rob us of any money left with us and instill fear in the poor, tortured, and destitute people. There was no mercy, no good will, no consideration left in this country. Our benevolent God seemed to have also turned His face away from us and become a spectator in this conspiracy, refusing to punish these cannibals.⁴ Finally, the majority of the people in the

⁴ Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 177, refer to the problem of Theodicy among the survivors. "For many survivors, the fact that Armenia was historically a Christian nation raised the ancient question...: 'How can a God who is all-powerful, loving and just allow evil to occur?'" ; Khachador Pilibosian in *They called me Mustafa: Memoir of an Immigrant*. Co-authored and edited with additional information by Helene Pilibosian. (Watertown, Mass: Ohan Press, 1992) 28, asks: "But where was God on those terrible days?"; Jernazian, *Ibid.*, 153, exclaims "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken us?" Similarly Chitjian exclaims: "How could He allow such an unconscionable act?" see Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian, *A Hair's Breadth from Death: Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian*, (London and Reading: Taderon Press, 2004), 5.

garden moved to the railway and settled in the wagons, while some remained waiting outside, since return to the garden was denied. That night we remained in the garden with around 1,000 other people.

The Armenians of Karaman, who so far had been helping the displaced Armenians, were themselves also uprooted like all of us, including the owner of the garden, Garabed Effendi Balekjian, who was even denied permission to cut a piece of wood for his tent from his own garden. What provoking and frustrating acts do we witness!

Chapter Six

*Eregli*¹

August 12 – 27, 1915

“In Eregli the exiles are encamped in the open fields in the neighborhood of the railway station. No protection is provided for them, and they have none except such tenting as they can make up for themselves out of carpets, coarse matting, cloaks, gummy sacks, sheets, cotton cloth, tablecloths, handkerchiefs. There are no sanitary arrangements for this hoard... The stench of this region is described as appalling”.

Letter sent by William Dodd, Physician in Konia,
to Henry Morgenthau, US ambassador to Turkey,
Sept. 8, 1915.²

Wednesday, August 12, 1915. Directly under the scorching midday sun, the policemen destroyed our tents and forced us into the train with all our belongings which we were transporting with great difficulty. Around eighty people were crammed in each wagon and there was not even room to stand. After a long tiring journey, we reached Eregli at midnight and were driven somewhere far from the railway station. On the river bank, having no time to unpack, I slept with my coat keeping me warm instead of a blanket, while my two *lambs* Noubar and Norair wrapped in a flannel slept with their mother. We spent our first night in the open air.

The following morning, Thursday, August 13, I woke up feeling sick because of the evening cold, but we were not left in peace. With bayonets and whips in their hands,

¹ Railway station after Karaman, see (Map 3). According to Seropian, Ibid., 38, Eregli, in the district of Konia, (not to be confused with the city bearing the same name on the Black Sea), is none other than the Roman Heracleia, where the tomb of Heracles was discovered in 1902.

² Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/189, 252.

the soldiers forced us to travel to Bozanti, so it was no use complaining. We had to think of a way to stay and rest for a few days. I then heard that the members of the soldiers' families were separated and not sent away immediately.³ So I managed to procure a *vesika*,⁴ an official document, and joined them. I put up my tent next to Father Arsen's⁵ and breathed a bit more easily, like a passenger who reached safe harbor after a stormy trip at sea.

Friday, August 14, was a relatively peaceful and calm day, not seeing the faces and loud brutal comportment of the soldiers. With Father Arsen, we walked along the river bank enjoying the consolation of a peaceful day and trying to briefly forget the terrible days of Karaman. However, our peace of mind and heart did not last very long. In that tent community the terrible news began circulating like lightning that two days ago the caravan of one of the refugees travelling to Bozanti was attacked by highway robbers, who stole their belongings and even killed some of them, including some *Izmitsi* acquaintances, a priest, and Garabed Mekhalian. This extremely disturbing news filled us with fear and anxiety that we would be sharing the same fate in a few days. It led most people to lose their minds.

³ Wilfred M. Post writes to Mr. W.W. Peet of the Constantinople Bible House, the following letter on November 25, 1915: "[at Eregli] There were about 2,000 exiles of whom about a third had permission from the Government to remain on account of being artisans or, in the cases of women and children, being members of soldiers' families... I heard many stories of how Armenians had been refused transportation by train and had been forced to hire wagons at exorbitant rates, ten liras and more from Eregli to Tarsus, or else had been driven off on foot leaving most of their belongings behind them." in Sarafian Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/251, 394.

⁴ Laissez-Passer that allowed circulation. Also denoting a permit, affidavit, document, identity papers or vouchers. (AAE)

⁵ According to Odian, Ibid., 82, the writer Aram Andonian was staying in Father Arsen's tent.

Sunday, August 16, 1915, the Virgin Mary's Assumption day (*Asdvadzadzin*). In the morning we visited with Armenag Arabian the town of Eregli and some sick *Ovajiktsis*⁶ who were abandoned at the Armenian school, unattended and without food, waiting for the salvation of death which still seemed far away. With heavy hearts we drew away from them, not realizing that we were going to envy those who were blessed with eternal sleep in the shelter of their beds.

At noon, when we returned to camp, we saw a frightful sight. The soldiers had dismantled all the tents and were forcing the poor population to move to Bozanti without ensuring any means of transportation.⁷ The situation was heartbreaking. Everywhere there were shouts of pleas and lamentations, for who dared to leave and go when the recent news of the previous days still filled us with terror and total helplessness? Around 400 to 500 women had the courage to plead with the *Kaïmakam*⁸ to provide us with carriages or trains if possible, and finally convinced him to postpone our departure for that day.

August 17, following the Virgin Mary's feast, again turned out to be a day of terror and fear. This time the savage policemen and *gendarmes* dismantled the tents completely and with their own hands dumped our goods in the carriages and forced us to pay them the sum of 14 pounds for the rental of each wagon. But how many of us were in a position to pay that amount for transport to Tarsus? Again the women were on the frontline and defied these orders by disrupting the dismantling of the tents and the piling of the furniture, arguing that it was impossible to pay such amounts of money. Thus started the terror. The pleas

⁶ Residents of Ovajik.

⁷ See similar account in Sarafian, *Ibid.*, Source NA/RG59/867.4016/251, 394.

⁸ Lieutenant, district governor; deputy mayor. The *kaïmakam* of Eregli was Faik Bey. Cf. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 574.

of thousands of women and girls filled the sky with their cries; we heard the sound of shooting, and we witnessed scenes of a massacre before our eyes. Soon all the tents were destroyed, and the whole camp was surrounded by soldiers. Some people were sent to the railway, others were pushed to rent carriages. Because I had the intelligence to move our tent close to the tents of the families of the military, we managed to escape the ordeal for that day as well.

August 18-19, 1915. For two days we enjoyed relative peace without hearing the brutal shouts of the soldiers telling us *ghalghen, yeghen, chekhen*,⁹ for it was the Sultan's birthday. Hearing of the many dangers of travel by carriage, we preferred to travel by train. With Krikor Dadourian, we went to the railway station to buy tickets to Bozanti, but it was impossible to secure any for that day.

Thursday, August 20, 1915. Today our Protestant brethren from Izmit received *vesikas* allowing them to return to Izmit and take the train back. This was an encouraging sign for us and we hoped that their return meant that conditions were easing up and, naïve as we were, we hoped that our turn would shortly come to go back home.¹⁰

Friday August 21, 1915. We woke up with the news that

⁹ To be roughly translated as "Wake up, clean up and go out, or Stand up, pack and move".(AAE)

¹⁰ W. S. Dodd in his letter to Ambassador Morgenthau states that "*the Protestants who were already in Eregli, notified that they were free, yet had to pay fifty liras to the police to get their permit to leave.*" Sarafian, Ibid., 253-4; Wilfred M. Post reports: "*A conductor on the train told me that, although the order had come for the return of the Protestants and the Catholics, he had seen about 100 to 150 of the latter from Ismid re-deported towards Angora...*" (Report 110) in Bryce and Toynbee, Ibid., 442.

the Governor of the Vilayet (Province) of Konia¹¹ was arriving in Eregli to check on us miserable, tortured compatriots of Izmit and Konia. We were all very excited by the rumors that his arrival meant good news and an attempt to resolve all our problems. Forming a delegation of all the notables of these two cities, we rushed to the railway station to meet this white dove, the bearer of good news. However, the soldiers stopped us from going to the railway and instead led us to the government building where the governor was to stay. For a few days we were moved by this good news and filled with quite an anxious optimism; meanwhile, contradictory rumors also spread with the news that the decision to deport us to Deir Zor was final. Alas, what disappointing and frustrating moments were these. One cannot imagine the feeling we had as we asked ourselves whether we were going to be able to escape this suffering without having to feel it directly on our skins. Woe - it was impossible to describe our mental torture.

On Sunday August 23, 1915, next to our tent, *Izmitsi* Djivan Effendi's wife's funeral took place, officiated by our prelate Father Stepanos. Afterwards we returned to our tent together with Father Arsen and we discussed the unclear, difficult and hopeless dilemma we were in while each tried to encourage and support the other.

On Monday, August 24, 1915, again the police and *gendarmes* started pulling down the tents and preparing the carts, forcing the people to pay 8 Ottoman coins to get to Tarsus. However, no one wanted to move and walk towards

¹¹ Jelal Bey was then the Vali of Konia. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, Ibid., 572; Seropian, Ibid., 27-30, describes how the Vali refused to deport the Armenians of Konia and was consequently recalled to Constantinople and demised; Hilmar Kaiser, "Regional Resistance to Central government policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915," *Journal of Genocide*, 12: 3,(2010): 173-218.

certain death, and all of us shouted in unison, “We will die here rather than move.” The carts returned empty, but the cannibal monsters resorted to other means.

The following morning they brought with them their *bashibozoukh*¹² friends and with their bayonets and whips, inspected all the tents and beat the males, who were then arrested and taken to jail in order to be sent to Bozanti the following morning. This was a horrendous three days’ walk and the Turks knew that the women, the children and the adolescents would raise hell before they would give in and move from Eregli towards the slaughterhouse. I managed to escape from my tent to the opposite bank of the river and ran across the fields, but like hunting dogs the soldiers chased me. I finally succeeded in seeking shelter in the tent of our relatives where for three long hours I hid under the mattresses. I cannot describe those interminable and traumatic hours. Finally, around twilight and before nightfall, I returned to my tent to hear that thousands of males had been arrested that day. Fear and terror reigned that night and one could hear cries and lamentations from every camp. It was a truly terrifying night!

The following morning, Wednesday, August 26, the search and arrest of the males continued. *Gendarmes*, cart drivers, robbers and other *bashibozoukhs* carrying heavy clubs in their hands began looking for males. Like the previous day, I again succeeded in escaping to the wide fields and hiding under a small bush. Then, like a terrified turtle, I stretched my head and suddenly saw two cannibal monsters coming towards me. In order not to surrender to them, I immediately took off my shoes and ran barefoot *in a gallop*¹³ towards the village and hid in some of the tents by the town, but they

¹² Irregular soldier, not part of the army. (AAE)

¹³ Armenian expression meaning as fast as I could.(AAE)

ran faster than I and, in the middle of the river, they grabbed me by the collar, beat me and pulled me back to the field.

Suddenly some female acquaintances from the tents began shouting and jumped at the soldiers and beat them up. I, making use of the diversion, ran away and took shelter in the tent of the *Izmitsi* Bodourian¹⁴ family and hid under the mattresses. Three girls, not to raise any suspicions, sat on the bed while I sneaked under it. The cannibals, having lost their prey and having been beaten by the women, became extremely provoked and losing their patience brought more *gendarmes* to search tent by tent looking for me. I, in the meantime, in my hideout, was receiving minute by minute news of the development.

You cannot imagine my fear and discomfort as I lay in the heat under the heavy weight of the girls while undergoing an infernal psychological trauma of waiting to be caught. I *sweated blood*¹⁵ in those long interminable hours.

Finally, when the soldiers moved away and gave up looking for me, I sneaked back to my tent, changed my clothes and carrying my small medicine bag, rushed to the railway station. In order to avoid recognition by any of the *gendarmes*, I took shelter in the office of the railway officer, Krikor Effendi Der Hovhanessian from Sivrihisar.¹⁶

Shortly, we were joined by Father Arsen and Mikayel Berberian, who had been previously arrested, but due to the mediation of Krikor Effendi, had just been released. We

¹⁴ Odian, *Ibid.*, 75, refers to a Karnig Bodourian from Bardizag who was with them in Giuleg Camp in the Taurus at the same time as Father Arsen and Prelate Stepanos.

¹⁵ Extremely worried.

¹⁶ A city in the province of Angora, Turkey. Cf. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 96. According to Seropian, *Ibid.*, 44, the railway storage officer at Eregli was Mr. Sarkis Ehmalian.

stayed there in safety and after dark attempted to return to our tents. I spent the whole night in anxiety and fear, waiting to be arrested at any moment.

The next morning, on Thursday, August 27, before daybreak, I, with Father Arsen and Bedros Agha Varnajian, went to the town of Eregli as previously planned, and took shelter in the Armenian Protestant preacher's house since more arrests were expected that day.

Towards evening, we returned to the tents to hear that the *gendarmes* had again come looking for me. I immediately rushed to the railway to buy tickets to escape this hellish situation. I was informed that there were no available seats in the wagons and only a first class compartment was available. I readily paid the requested amount and without wasting a minute, I returned to my tent, collected my family and belongings, and rushed to the railway station hoping to breathe freely. I settled my brother Ghazaros and his children with us and we departed towards Bozanti.

Chapter Seven

*Bozanti-Tarsus*¹

August 28 – Early November, 1915

"There seems to be no end to the caravan which moves over the mountain range from Bozanti south. Throughout the day from sunrise to sunset, the road as far as one can see, is crowded with these exiles. Just outside Tarsus I saw a dead woman lying by the roadside and further on passed two more dead women, one of whom was being carried by two gendarmes away from the roadside to be buried. Her legs and arms were so emaciated that the bones were nearly through her flesh and her face was swollen and purple from exposure. Further along, I saw two gendarmes carrying a dead child between them from the road where they had dug a grave. Many of these soldiers and gendarmes who follow the caravan have spades and as soon as an Armenian dies, they take the corpse away from the roadside and bury it."

Walter M. Geddes, American Businessman,
October 1915.²

Friday, August 28. Early in the morning we reached Bozanti. After spending those last extremely stressful and insane days, I had the feeling of having reached a free country abroad. The fear of being arrested, of being torn away from my children, had constantly haunted me for the past days. We set up the tents on a hill near the railway, but the town's nature seemed to compete with the evildoers in

¹ William S. Dodd, from the American Hospital at Konia, wrote to Ambassador Morgenthau on August 15, 1915: "...I have heard from a conductor on the railway of the scenes at Bosanti the terminus. He said 'Don't ask me, it is hell on earth, women and girls in groups wailing and shrieking for bread, men lying on their backs too weak to move crying for bread, unburied bodies of the dead lying about'. The Pass below is filled with bands of 'Chettes', marauders who are waiting to swoop down on them, and these are authorized by the Government, so Turkish soldiers tell us". Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016 / 137, 194.

² Sarafian, Ibid., 382.

making our lives more miserable. A terrible wind started blowing with such fury that the task of keeping up the tents was a futile exercise. Having been hit by mother nature this time, I decided to wait for a few days for the arrival of Father Arsen who was still in Eregli. During this time, with broken hearts, we witnessed the arrival of the other Armenian families who had walked all the way from Eregli, totally exhausted and wasted. We also saw other caravans of people who had walked all the way from Angora³. Equally exhausted were some of the Armenian soldiers who passed by us under close supervision and were strictly forbidden to talk to their families or intervene on their behalf. They were only allowed to communicate with tearful glances.

September 1, 1915. Half an hour from the Bozanti railway station, in the Taurus Mountain range, we moved towards a maternity hospital where we met many *Izmitsis* and *Adabazartsis*, and we rested there for a few days. But one evening, unexpectedly, dressed in the uniforms of *gendarmes*, brigands came and shouted that all males should immediately set out for Tarsus. You cannot imagine our sadness, our turmoil and fear at that moment. We convened all the *Adabazartsis* and discussed means of finding a way out of this disaster. Finally, we agreed among ourselves to raise some money, and having fed those hungry animals, we managed to escape that brutal fate.

That night until dawn I was terrified and worried of my being sent away. When the cannibals had issued the order of our deportation, it was a terrible situation for me: my one-year-old Norair was almost dying, while my three-year-old Noubar and my old mother could hardly walk. As for my wife, Hroust, she was extremely terrified, and leaving them in the mountains of Bozanti meant never seeing them alive again.

³ Modern Ankara, capital of Turkey.

On Wednesday, September 2, we applied directly to the directorate to supply us with means of transport no matter the cost. The following day, Thursday, it became possible to rent two carts and my family settled in them: my wife, mother, Noubar, Norair and our belongings. The road was extremely dangerous; on both sides of the valleys we could spot overturned carts and the bodies of the victims. We could also see some caravans looted by the brigands. The few people who still had some means and were travelling by cart were left at the mercy of robbers and thieves, while the majority of the people, now completely destitute, were condemned to walk this *via dolorosa* with extreme difficulty.

At night we reached the Khan Chifteh Haoush, where I met my friend Dr. Zareh Loutoufian, who was very depressed. I heard from him the sad account of his own tragedy as he walked for weeks from Narlekhan all the way to Bozanti, having been exposed to unimaginable suffering from hunger and thirst on the way; in the evening we invited him to our tent to have dinner with us in complete darkness. It was impossible to see him again the next day.

September 4, Friday, 1915. After spending two days in the Taurus mountain range, we safely reached the Giuleg⁴ railway station of Tarsus and found out that a huge camp settlement was made for the Armenian refugees who had arrived before us.⁵ Making use of the comparatively less

⁴ The Giuleg Bogazi passes are the Cilician Gates which give access to the Taurus Mountain from the North at Bozanti-Belemdik. G.Balakian, Ibid., 184.

⁵ Miss H.E. Wallis, a foreign resident at Adana recording her experiences between September 1914 to September 1915, reports: "*As long as I live I can never forget the camp I saw twice near Geulik station, not far from Tarsus. Here there were 10,000 to 15,000 Armenians awaiting further deportation towards the desert*"; in Bryce and Toynbee, Ibid., Document 129, 515; Odian, Ibid., 74, describes the Giuleg Station encampment which he visited in early October 1915 and states that it had around 30,000-40,000 Armenians generally from the regions of Adabazar, Izmit, Bardizag, Broussa, Edirne, Rodosto and Banderma.

strict supervision of the *Sevkiyet memuri*,⁶ we managed to find my mother-in-law with all her family, who for the past weeks had been desperately waiting for us.

We had hardly had a few days of peace and rest when we were awakened one morning by one of the employees of the *Sevkiyet* with a whip in his hand, attacking and dismantling our tents and urging us to move. I begged him to give us a few days time showing him the dying Norair, but he heartlessly refused my pleas and beat me. I rushed to the railway and requested to meet the Chief officer in charge of the refugees and made the same plea. I finally succeeded in not being included in that departing group. However, the *Sevkiyet* officer came every day and forced the people to move. They had already succeeded in evacuating two train loads of refugees to Osmaniye.⁷

For a couple of days, we dismantled the tents and pretended to be packing and preparing to travel and through this ruse and through bribes, we managed to stay two more weeks at Bozanti, avoiding deportation. Towards the end of the month of September, they looked for construction workers (*amele taburi*)⁸ from among the refugees to build special buildings. On this occasion, my father-in-law registered his name and due to that a special flag was put on our tents, relieving us a little bit from the *Sevkiyet* officers and their pestering. However, the officer personally knew me, and every time we came face to face, I was suddenly gripped with the fear of deportation, so I tried to avoid him as much as possible and constantly fled to the fields.

For two continuous months, we spent these *Sevkiyet*

⁶ Deportation Officer.

⁷ Near modern city of Incirlik. (AAE)

⁸ Forced labor in the Amanus Mountains and the Taurus Railway Line cf. G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 311-316.

days in this manner, waiting for the unknown situation. Everyday, thousands of refugees and caravans came and went, sometimes staying overnight and often without any time to rest and refresh themselves.

Certain events were inexplicable and extraordinary. On the one hand, it was clear to all of us that the plan to eradicate the Ottoman Armenians was a definite decision and already underway. On the other hand, we could not understand why bread was distributed to the refugees who reached Tarsus. One day we would be as many as 14,000-15,000 people as recorded by Father Arsen, who had been appointed on these days as the *I'ashe*⁹ employee assigned with the task of drawing the list of refugees and eventually distributing the bread. To what can we attribute this clement gesture, to give some humanitarian aid to a people condemned to be sent to the slaughterhouse?

Sometimes we became witnesses to some heartbreaking and terrible scenes, especially during the month of October, when torrential rains started to pour down and all the tents became submerged in water. The camp settlement was transformed into a lake and all our belongings floated on the surface of the water. The sick hardly had a chance to survive, and the handful of tents that withstood the weather were truly lucky and blessed. One night, under that torrential deluge and due to the heavy weight of the waters, our tent also collapsed, and all twenty of us, drenched to the bones, rushed to the tent of Father Arsen¹⁰ and bundled up together

⁹ Food distribution officer.

¹⁰ Odian, Ibid., 82-83, 78-79, states that in the tent of Father Arsen in Giuleg station, he met Aram Andonian, the Constantinople writer who was deported in April 1915 to Chankiri but due to an accident, was taken to hospital, while his friends were massacred at that time. He also mentions seeing the Prelate of Izmit, Father Stepanos Hovagimian who sat near a stream, talked to his parish and sang, "*I wish I could see my Cilicia*."

squatting in one dry corner. It looked as if the Good Lord was also handing the cruel Turks an additional hand in torturing and tormenting the poor nation being sent to the slaughterhouse. Were we the stepchildren of the Lord or were we truly a guilty nation to deserve, in addition to all this suffering, torrential rain and mud? One absolutely had to have a will of steel and a body of marble to be able to survive all these calamities.

One evening, at nightfall, taking a cart, my wife, children and I, as well as Mrs. Boligian and Kurdian, tried to escape to Tarsus, but half-way there we were noticed by the *gendarmes* who, beating us with their whips, forced us back to the camp. The cart was stuck in the mud, the rain fell torrentially; however, after much difficulty, we finally returned to the camp.

Two days later our friend, Kevork Kutnerian, intervened on my behalf and secured a report from the town doctor stating I was sick and confirming that I needed complete rest. This time, in broad daylight, with my children, I was allowed to go to Tarsus and rent a room where we stayed for around ten days, forgetting for a while the horrible life of the camp. We were still scared to wander around freely in the city and terrified of being arrested.

Early one morning, the policemen entered our room and, loading our belongings on the carts, forced us back to the tents. There was no point in protesting, complaining or resisting, and we simply had to comply with their wishes.

We were now in the early days of November 1915; the cold and the frequent rain was regular; the caravan refugees had stopped coming or probably were all massacred, since for the past four months they had uninterruptedly come and gone through this town. An estimate of half a million Armenian refugees were said to have passed through Bozanti.

The construction workers having finished their work at the Giuleg station were allowed to dismantle their tents; at this time, we were also given permission to leave with the last convoy (*posta*) of construction workers (*ameles*). Having completed the buildings, construction workers were no more needed.

Chapter Eight

*Mamura-Amanus-Islahiye*¹

November 9 – Early December, 1915

“...In 1916, the Baghdad railway line extended from Constantinople directly to the Bozanti pass in the Taurus mountains. The line was interrupted here at Bozanti inasmuch as the tunnels through the Taurus hadn’t yet been completed; it resumed at Injirli, before reaching the Mamure station via Adana and Osmaniye. At Mamure, the last stop on the plain of Cilicia, the line was again interrupted, as the tunnels through the Taurus were still under construction. At Islahiye the line resumed, terminating in Aleppo...Thus when all the Armenians living near the railway line were deported, the most fortunate reached Bozanti by train. Those who came on foot went from here via the Giuleg pass route to Injirli and...then continued by train to Osmaniye via Adana, From there they crossed the Amanos mountain chain on foot via Hasanbeyli until they reached Islahiye.”

Grigoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha*, 1922.²

November 6, 1915. That evening we travelled by train and passed through Adana's Osmaniye station and the following night we reached Mamura³ station. The rain was pouring torrentially and we pleaded with the local Armenian

¹ “Thus on the Baghdad railway line from Constantinople to Aleppo, three points – Bozanti, Kanle-gechid and Islahiye – had been transitional gathering places for Armenian deportees who had traversed the roads.” G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 241; Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 632-633.

² G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 240-241.

³ Sister Beatrice Rohner, from a German Protestant Relief Center in Aleppo, reports about her visit to the Mamura camp on November 26th, 1915 stating: “We saw thousands of tiny low tents, made out of thin material. An innumerable crowd of people belonging to all ages and every class of society!...A group of hungry begging children and women were at our heels: “Hanum, bread! Hanum, I am hungry, we did not eat anything today and yesterday!”...Suddenly, the order of departure was given. If anybody did not hurry in striking their tent, it was pulled down with the bayonet.” in Sarafian, *Ibid.*, Source NA/RG59/867.4016/260, 435-6.

railway master⁴ to allow us to spend the night in the train rather than disembark. He agreed but said that we all had to gather in seven wagons rather than the actual fourteen. There was no other alternative and this was the better of two evils. It was better than going out and sleeping in the open air and getting drenched. It was preferable to squeeze ourselves in the closed wagons and sit over our belongings until daybreak. That night, we could hear from the tents outside sounds of weeping and lamenting, screaming and shouting, for brigands were attacking the camp and stealing the few remaining belongings of the refugees.

The following day we were led to a spot two kilometers away from Mamura where we put up our tents in the muddy waters. Finally, we managed to find a relatively drier spot and settled. The next day we went to Osmaniye city, two and a half hours away, with Kurken, the son of *Izmitsi* Zenob Agha, and after touring the city and visiting our friend Yervant Effendi Papazian, we returned to Mamura.

A short while later, we were accosted by a Circassian (*cherkez*)⁵ horseman who stopped us; we froze in fear. The man felt sorry for us and first asked for my coat. When I told him that this served me as bed and mattress, he insisted that I give him my leather gloves, which I readily did without any protest since I was afraid to provoke him further; after all he could put us in a more difficult situation. He was such an honest thief and easily satisfied with so little that he let us continue our way. "*Had I been a liar, a Soud bochoug, I would have dealt with you differently,*" said he and left. And

⁴ G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 315, mentions Yeghiazar Deirmenjian, "*a noble and patriotic young man*" who was the railroad stationmaster at Dorak in the Taurus Mountains.

⁵ Following the Russian victory of 1877, thousands of Circassians, a Muslim Caucasian ethnic minority, were relocated in Anatolia. The Turkish Government's inability to deal with these refugees led to their encouragement to survive by plunder and robbery. cf. Vahakn Dadrian, *Warrant for Genocide*, 30.

we, having had such a narrow escape from an immense danger, and gripped by the fear of meeting another one, ran at full speed towards Mamura to reach our tents by twilight. In the vicinity of the city of Osmaniye,⁶ we were shown thousands of piled graves in which rested poor Armenian refugees who had breathed their last and succumbed under the weight of *their heavy crosses*.

On the morning of November 10, 1915, 300 camels were brought to us so that we may rent each one for 5 *mejidias* to travel to Islahiye.⁷ We rented three camels for all our belongings and for the children, while we continued walking *our road to Golgotha*.

At night we set up our tents at a place called Kanle-Gechid.⁸ The next morning, November 11, we continued on our way and the same evening reached Hassan Beyli,⁹ which had become totally deserted after its Armenian population had been deported. We met our friends the Ghazarians and many *Ovajiktsis* and spent one night here in order to more or less rest our worn out bodies.

⁶ Sister Paula Schäfer reports on November 16, 1915: “Three hours from Osmanié two dying men were lying absolutely alone in the field. They had been here for days without any food or even a drop of water, after their companions had continued their march. They had grown as thin as skeletons and only their heavy breathing showed that there was still life in them. Unburied women and children were lying in the ditches”. Sarafian, *Ibid.*, 435.

⁷ “Islahiye: A Field of Mounds for Graves... was a special temporary encampment for deported Armenians. From here they were sent to Aleppo on foot unless, through a bribe, they had secured permission to go by train.” G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 240-241.

⁸ Bloody Passage. “Because the Amanos tunnels were not yet opened, the only road to Aleppo was this Kanle-Gechid highway...a bloody passage point for the hundreds of thousands of Armenian exiles being driven to Der Zor”. *Ibid.*, 222.

⁹ “Hasanbeyli is a completely Armenian town deep in the forested Amanos mountains... Before the war it had a population of more than eight hundred Armenian households, but when we were passing through in 1916, there were only forty left.” *Ibid.*, 230.

The next morning, the caravan moved toward Golgotha, and we started climbing the heights of Mount Amanus, (*Giavour Dag*h or Infidel Mountain). At certain times we tried to quench our thirst by eating a mouthful of snow. At this stage we witnessed a heart-rending scene. We saw a woman frozen to death with her child at her breast. On the other side of the road, we could see people totally exhausted lying on the ground and incapable of taking one additional step, waiting for the salvation of death. After reaching the top of Amanus, we started the descent along the slopes of the pass and we stopped at a place called Intilli,¹⁰ exhausted and broken down.

November 13, 1915. We continued on our way, and as we passed one of the gorges of the mountain passes, the caravan guide advised us to cluster together and not space out from each other, since this was a famous place for highway robbers. Terrified and scared, we gathered the camels and rode very carefully, since sometimes, the camels would overturn and those sitting on them would end up in the valleys, causing an avalanche.

I stuck closely to my camels and kept a close eye on my family. At night our caravan finally reached Islahiye,¹¹

¹⁰ Walter M. Geddes reports in a memorandum in September 1915: “At Intily there was an encampment of about 10,000 and at Kadma a large encampment of 150,000. At this place adjacent to their encampment were Turkish troops who exacted “backshish” from them before they would let them go on the road to Aleppo.” Sarafian, *Ibid.*, 381. In his memoirs, Rev. Abraham H. Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep. A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*, translated from the original Armenian manuscripts by Vartan Hartunian. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 84, describes the Intilli deportation as “second in horribleness only to the Deir-el-Zor deportation”.

¹¹ Sister Paula Schäfer's reports about her visit to Islahie on December 1, 1915: “The camp in Islahie itself is the saddest thing I have ever seen. Right at the entrance a heap of dead bodies lay unburied. I counted 35, in another place 22, right close by where the tents of those who were down with bad dysentery...In one single day the burial-commission buried as many as 500 people”. Sarafian, *Ibid.*, 436-437.

and we were allowed to spend the night on a spot of land; we resumed our trip the following morning. Without dismissing the camels, our friends advised us not to set up tents at nightfall but to move to that spot where Father Arsen and many *Ovajiktsis* were staying. Since the Father had been appointed ration distributor (*I'ashe Memuri*), he had also delegated some work to a number of people and had succeeded in exempting them from *Sevkiyet*.

We stayed there for twenty days and rested a bit with thousands of desperate people, hungry like us, witnessing horrible atrocities. The poor gravediggers could not cope any more with the scope of death. They gathered a number of corpses, piled them all together, and buried them in one pit. One of them in a suffocating voice begged the gravedigger not to pull him by the legs and said, "*Brother (Yeghpayr), I have not died yet. Wait till morning before you bury me.*"¹² At times the gravediggers used to fight over a corpse, hoping to find some money or a ring on the dead body, for sometimes unknown rich people were to be found among the corpses.

As of early December 1915, not a single new refugee caravan arrived in Islahiye and only the tents of some sanitary workers, guards and gravediggers were left behind.

¹² "*The dying Armenians, without the tools or the vigor to bury those already dead, would depart in their caravans every day, leaving the corpses of their loved ones behind, without even the usual loud and protracted expression of grief.*" G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 242.

Chapter Nine

*Katma-Akhterim*¹

December 4 – 7, 1915

“From Kadma on to Aleppo, I witnessed the worst sights of the whole trip.”

Walter M. Geddes²

“The town of Katma was like a huge depository for human debris. Armenians from all over Turkey had been herded into this camp ... Thousands of deportees were crammed into a small area with unbearable conditions.”

Memoirs of Vergeen Kalendarian Meghrouni.³

On December 4, 1915, we left with the last convoy and took the train to a place called Katma, a station where we saw a huge encampment gathering all the refugees who had arrived from Islahiye during the past two months and awaited their unknown fate.

For the first time, without any of us having to disembark, the announcement was made that the train was to resume its trip to Aleppo. I was happy to hear this since I knew that upon my arrival there, I could, as a military pharmacist, request to be positioned somewhere, as had been done to all the certified Armenian pharmacists who had passed by

¹ Stations on the Deportation route, (Map 3). Hilmar Kaiser, in collaboration with Luther and Nancy Eskijian, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor, Death, Survival, and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915-1917*, (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, Taderon Press, (2002), 19, refers to the concentration camp of Katma as “An Entrance to Hell.”

² Walter M. Geddes cited in the memorandum sent by Consul Horton from Smyrna, November 8, 1915, Sarafian, *Ibid.*, Source: NA/RG59/867. 4016/243, 381.

³ Mae M. Derdarian, *Vergeen, A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide, Based on a Memoir by Virginia Meghrouni*, (Los Angeles: ATMUS Press Publication, 1996), 51.

Katma and Azaz. Having received *vesikas*, they had continued to Jerusalem or elsewhere and thus survived the Armenian massacres. Having stayed so long at Tarsus, I had lost that chance, but now, hearing that we were heading directly to Aleppo, I was filled with great joy.

However, how great was my disappointment and sorrow, when just one station before reaching Aleppo, at Musulmaniyeh, at the Baghdad junction, the train changed its course and started heading towards Ras-el-Ain.⁴ We had often heard of that hellish place and there was no doubt that this train was taking us to our graves. Fear and terror, befell us; we no longer had the heart to communicate, to console or to give hope to each other. And in our wagon where we were all crowded in - Father Arsen with his relatives, the Ghazarians, the Chetchetians, and also other friends and acquaintances - even the most optimistic among us by now had lost hope and was depressed, *and one thousand and one evil*⁵ thoughts started surfacing.

From the very first moment we reached this station, the evil plans clearly started to unfold, for the *gendarmes* at gunpoint would forbid us even to get water. Thirsty, tired and depressed we arrived at nightfall to a station called Akhterim.⁶ All was silent and deserted and we were all nursing that horrible thought that we were brought to this God-forsaken place to be massacred.

It was a moonless and cloudy night. The *gendarmes*

⁴ Ibid., 73, Vergeen refers to it as the “*God Forsaken Ras-al-Ayn, the dry desert with no vegetation at all.*” She also mentions that in early October, a disastrous epidemic of typhus spread throughout the camp and the Doctor at Ras-el-Ayn station was an Armenian called Vahan Hershakian [Hreshdakian], who was spared simply because his wife was German.

⁵ *One thousand and one* is an Armenian expression denoting many or numerous (AAE).

⁶ Map 3.

forced us to take all our belongings to a place about half an hour away, on condition that we carry everything in a single load since it would be impossible to return, shouted the monsters, putting us in a terrifying, confused situation. We now faced the difficult task of leaving some of our essential belongings behind and selecting only a few of them. We then thought of collecting some money among ourselves to buy the cooperation of these cannibals, and we finally succeeded in sleeping in the Akhterim railway station that night. Without water and haunted by fear and terror, we were constantly threatened of being attacked and robbed at night.

December 6, 1915, was a day of unimaginable terror and fear. Early morning we carried some of our belongings, gave the rest to some friends who had nothing to carry, and transported them half an hour away to a place called Katma, a station which carried the refugees from Azaz towards the desert. In the morning, the *Sevkiyet* resumed pushing us with their bayonets and rifle butts. Seeing this horrible scene, I advised my family to slow their pace, hoping that the caravan would completely depart and we would probably escape deportation that day. However, that monster referred to as the *gendarmes* commandant, noticing that we had slackened our pace, rushed towards us on his horse and in an angry and demented state ordered his soldiers to point their guns at us and shouted: "*Sursun, shu, khinzir, khain milleti, varsenlar, gebersinler.*"⁷

We then attempted the impossible to catch up with the caravan since they were equipped with donkeys and had advanced quite a lot. We finally rented some oxen and mules - each at five *mejidias* - to carry our stuff all the way

⁷ Turkish insults: Get moving you swine, treacherous community, get up and go die. (AAE)

to Bab.⁸ One soldier asked for my umbrella, and I gave it to him; another wanted the water jug, so we also parted with it; a third soldier wanted a present because he had found us the donkeys: imagine! a reward for the donkeys that were going to accompany us on the long and certain Calvary and death awaiting us. All the members of my family had to carry some part of the belongings, even each of the little children, except my poor sick old mother whose only task was now to carry the one-year-old baby Norair. As for my little Noubar, who was still not four, he had to walk as we did on this long and tiresome march.

I was now hurrying in order to catch up and not lose sight of the donkeys, as our donkey drivers were all Bedouins who just waited for the right moment to run away with our belongings. For this reason, I separated from my family and, carrying a bundle, closely followed the donkeys. The road was arid and deserted. There was no water, no tree and no sign of any greenery. The monsters of our fate had chosen the harshest and most extreme paths of nature to further torture us poor refugees. Alongside the long and narrow paths, we sometimes came across poor old people who, unable to *carry their own crosses* anymore, sat and waited for salvation. But each one of us had our own personal cross to carry, and everyone was reduced to the survival instinct for himself and his immediate family. I saw children abandoned by their parents who could no longer carry the additional weights. I saw very sick people lying along the sides of the road, waiting for the salvation of death.

For three hours, I walked, witnessing with mixed and disturbed sentiments these agonizing and heart-rending scenes, and continued walking on the road, always keeping the donkeys in my line of vision. After a while, the caravan

⁸ A station after Katma. (Map 3).

involuntarily divided into two lines: a faster group that continued without looking back, and a slower one made up of weaker people lagging behind; thus between these two, there was around half an hour difference and I found myself alone caught between the two groups. There was no one around me, and trapped between two hills, I was alone with no one except the donkey driver - quite a dilemma.

Suddenly I saw a savage man emerge out of nowhere and approaching the mule driver whisper something in his ear. He then approached me and pretending that he wanted to buy a few things, asked a few questions. When I answered negatively, he looked around to make sure of the absence of a single soul, reached for his six-bullet revolver, pointed it at my forehead and ordered me to give him the bag hanging on my back. It was a critical moment; I tried to keep calm but it was impossible: my legs and hands were shaking excessively. I thought to myself, if I can save my skin by simply handing him the bag, then I would really have had a narrow escape. Fortunately, to gain some time, I pretended to reach for my bag while explaining to that crook that there was nothing worthy in it. We remained in this stance for a few minutes, with the gun pointing at my forehead and threatening me with imminent death, when I saw at the top of the mountain the tip of an approaching caravan. I began shouting at the top of my voice, "*Jandarmalar koshun*" (Help soldiers). The cannibal monster, unhappy at this unexpected turn of events and terrified of being arrested, escaped at full speed. All of a sudden, filled with a sudden courage, I picked up some stones and threw them at the running man.

The caravan of beaten and defeated refugees gradually approached me. They knew very well that there was no *gendarme* escort with them and that the fate of all of us was left to chance. There was only one soldier in front of

the caravan. During this time, our donkeys had advanced by a good fifteen minutes and I had to run to catch up with them and make sure that we had not lost all our belongings. Suddenly, I heard wild screams, savage cries and pleas coming from the destination towards which I was heading. Later, I was told that a group of brigands had just attacked the front caravan and robbed the people of their belongings. The *gendarmes* pretended to attack them but too late.

We walked continuously, walked and walked until nightfall, just like the wandering Jews,⁹ until we arrived at an Arab village. We discovered that the muleteers had abandoned all our belongings along the roadside, although we had previously agreed that they would carry them all the way to Bab. Although extremely exhausted and worn out, I was unable to accompany them on the last track of our journey to the village. I put up the tent in the middle of the village since there was great fear of night attacks in the outskirts. Later, the rest of the delayed caravan caught up with me: my wife, Noubar, my mother-in-law, my brother-in-law and my sisters-in-law. Finally, in the middle of the night, my father-in-law arrived and informed us that my mother Mariam and Norair had stayed behind and that we needed to send a horse or a donkey to bring them back. I immediately looked for someone who would go and bring them, but unfortunately, none of the refugees dared to leave their tents at night. Finally, three local Arab natives agreed, in return for a fee, to go and look for them and bring them back. We cannot describe the state of mind we were in, waiting impatiently for them.

At that moment, Father Arsen and three refugee Armenian acquaintances came to tell us that the village we had encamped in was a very dangerous one and considered to

⁹ Same expression used by another survivor, Vahram Dadrian, *Ibid.*, 60.

be a brigands' nest. They suggested that we collect some money among ourselves and pay it to the Sheikh of the area to earn his protection for the night. We immediately agreed and participated in the collection.

Around midnight, the Arab men we had sent returned without my mother and Norair and said that they had found no one. What we went through that night is unimaginable. Husband and wife, crying and lamenting, and breeding the worst thoughts: What situation were they in tonight? What was my poor mother doing now? The Arabs were now going to attack them, rob them and kill them. My poor Norair, was he going to burst from crying? Poor Mother, was she going to die of fear? Poor Norair, Poor Mother. Would we ever see them again or had we lost them forever? Sometimes out there in the dark around the tents, we would hear the sound of gunfire which heralded the movement of night brigand activities and this added further fear and trauma to our already terrible situation. Time seemed eternal - it was probably one of the most difficult, disturbing and agonizing nights of our lives, and we spent it sleeplessly until morning.

December 7, 1915. The weather in the early morning was overcast and extremely cold and cloudy. Orders were given to us to pack and move. But how could we leave this location without having the consolation of seeing my mother and Norair, dead or alive? Yet we had no choice in deciding whether to stay or to move. Like sheep led to the slaughterhouse, we were forced to go on with our march.

As our donkey driver of the previous day had left, we now had to hire new donkeys and continue our march. Heartbroken, with red and worn-out eyes, I no longer wanted to carry anything, and as my only consolation, I carried my Noubar holding him close to my chest and followed the caravan.

Chapter Ten

*Bab*¹

December 8 – 9, 1915

“Thousands of miserable, half-naked widows, without one male adult accompanying them, passed by Bab, arriving through Mumbaj, from the various regions of Armenia and on their way to Aleppo.”

Kévorkian, *The Extermination of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk Regime (1915-1916)*, 79.

After an exhausting trip, we arrived at the noon of December 8, 1915, in the city of Bab and set up our tents at a spot a quarter of an hour's distance away from a huge refugee camp which was already established. Entrance to the actual city of Bab was totally forbidden to us. Our first task was to sell again half of our belongings since we went through much trouble to transport them and so far, due to them, I had the great misfortune of sacrificing two of our family members.

Towards evening, among the new caravan arrivals and through some of our local villagers, we were told that Norair was alive and soon would be brought back to us. They said that our friends, the Ghazarians, from whom we were separated the previous day, and who had to spend the night at another location, had seen my mother and my Norair along the roadside that morning. Since it was impossible to carry both and bring them, they had carried with them Norair. As for my mother, they assured me that they had made arrangements for her to be brought to us

¹ See Map 3. “With the beginning of winter and the arrival of the deportees from the camp of Katma-Azaz, typhus broke out in Bab. Four hundred to 500 people died there daily”. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 635.

the same evening. I hurried to find means of sending people to find her. Since none of the refugees dared leave the tents and go to town to find someone, I again found myself in the sad predicament of leaving my mother in the open air for a second night. I was in a terrible psychological and mental state and had to spend another horrible night torn by qualms and guilt.

Early the following morning, I managed to sneak to town and contact an Armenian from Cilicia established there, who, for a fee, agreed to undertake the task of finding my mother, whether dead or alive. Finally, towards evening, that clever Armenian returned with my mother, who was in a state totally beyond recognition. Having been without food and drink for two days, she had lost tremendous weight and her face was scorched by the sun. Dressed only in a torn nightgown, she was handed to me. According to her account, Bedouins had robbed her three times, leaving her in her tattered nightgown, and the monsters had even taken Norair's clothes as well. Later, she added, some Arab women had even attempted to steal the baby from her too, but she had strongly resisted and after much pleading, they had left her alone. Some took pity on her and gave her a loaf of dry bread which she slowly chewed and fed the infant during the next twenty four hours. What difficulties had my poor mother and my lamb Norair undergone!

On the morning of December 9, I again succeeded in sneaking into Bab and happened to meet our good friend from Izmit, Hrant Mardirossian, upon whose suggestion I appealed to the military governor and testified to my being a certified pharmacist and requested that I be taken into military service as they had done with others. In an extremely ironic and mercilessly rude tone, he advised me to go to Deir Zor and apply there, at the same time praising the glories

of that city. Disappointed, I came out and appealed again to the city's *Kaïmakam*,² who angrily and brutally shouted at me saying: “*Eyolouna Devam et* (Continue your way).”

With all the doors now closed in my face, including that of going to Aleppo, I returned to my tent devastated, heartbroken and disappointed, only to find a terrible and infernal situation had developed there: the soldiers with swords and rifles were attacking and dismantling the tents, and the *Sevkiyet* had started all over again.

In order to avoid being beaten up with the soldiers' bayonets, I was forced again to rent a few camels and a mule to carry my mother, and we accompanied the caravan, moving forward. The journey was extremely difficult for me; my mother's mule refused to move forward and often tripped and fell. I tried not to lag behind the caravan since it was very dangerous, but we were governed by the moods and whims of the animal. For three days we continued our *Way of the Cross* with great difficulty and in terror, for the roads were insecure; there was little water and no bread, and we were extremely exhausted. All these factors explained why at every ten steps, we came across a corpse, witnessing all these sick people who were totally worn out and had collapsed along the roads.

² Kévorkian, *Ibid.*, 635, mentions that between October 15, 1914 and March 27, 1916, the *kaïmakam* at Bab was Shafi Bey and the *Sevkiyet* officer was Muharrim Bey.

Chapter Eleven

*Meskene*¹

December 12 – December 31, 1915

“The impression which this immense and dismal plain of Meskene leaves is sad and pitiable. Information obtained on the spot permit me to state that nearly 60,000 Armenians are buried there, carried off by hunger, by privations of all sorts, by intestinal diseases and typhus which is the result. As far as the eye can reach mounds are seen containing 200 to 300 corpses buried in the ground pele mele, women, children and old people belonging to different families.”

Letter by August Bernau² to Jesse B. Jackson, American Consul in Aleppo, September 10, 1916.³

Finally on the evening of December 12, 1915, we reached Meskene, one of the most infamous stations of the Armenian deportation. Situated on the banks of the Euphrates, it is an endless desert land devoid of grass or greenery. All the families who had come from the Izmit area, and only one from Ovajik, Serabion with his family, had settled on the banks of the Euphrates. As they prepared themselves to move to Deir Zor, they suggested that we accompany them. But we were so terribly exhausted and worn out, we declined and decided to rest for a few days.

The next day, 6 to 7 large barges sailed in and were filled with all the *Izmitsis*, under the leadership of Onnig Khachadourian, to be moved unknowingly to the great and final slaughterhouse: Deir Zor. They were happy that they had

¹ Map 3.

² August Bernau was the former local Manager of the Vacuum Oil Company of New York, employed at the US Consulate in Aleppo. Sarafian, *Ibid.*, 593.

³ Sarafian, *Ibid.*, Source NA/RG59/867.4016/302, 557.

taken the shortest and easiest way. Later the news reached us that these boats were attacked, many of the people had been killed, and others drowned in the treacherous waters of the Euphrates. For three weeks we stayed at Meskene, together with Father Arsen, his relatives and the Ghazarians. Already a huge encampment was established there, and in each tent there was at least one sick person. Every morning the number of dead reached hundreds due to the cold, filth, lack of hygiene, malnutrition, and lack of medical care to treat the many diseases we were exposed to. I also became sick and was bed-ridden for eighteen days due to severe gastrointestinal flu. During this time, my mother passed away. On December 22, Father Arsen carried out the funeral rites and we buried her among all the other refugees there. That same evening my clothes were stolen together with the 17 gold Ottoman coins hidden in them. But due to my being desolate and sick, I did not consider this material loss a great one. My only worry was my health and to get well as soon as possible.

Every night the robbers attacked the tents and robbed the poor people, and every day the *Sevkiyet* went on. It seemed as if we had rented the spot where we pitched our tents and everyday, through Mr. Charkejian, we sent payments to the officials, so that during my illness they would not touch us and would not dismantle our tents. Later they began requesting medical reports from the sick, so I asked the pharmacist Kevork Kutnerian, who was performing the job of doctor and writing medical reports, (and who later himself passed away in Meskene) to provide me with a report confirming my being sick and unable to travel. Therefore, we managed to rest a few days and further delay our deportation. But I had become extremely hopeless, gripped by fear and depressed, everyday watching or receiving the news of the death of good friends, the latest of whom was Mr. H. Baghbaghian.

December 30, 1915. The *gendarmes* became active again and without any consideration for the sick and dying, they began dismantling the tents. I did not have the energy to sit, much less to walk, since I was still in a period of convalescence after my disease and in dire need of rest. But to whom was I to plead my case? We complied with their wishes and rented two carts and joined the caravan towards unknown destinations. That night we camped near a village of Arab nomads and stayed awake until morning in an extremely alarming and fearful situation.

On December 31, 1915, we continued our deadly march. I was feeling extremely weak, the weather was exceptionally cold, and I was afraid of having a relapse. While crossing a valley between two hills, we heard gunshots in the air, and with the speed of lightning, rumors spread in the caravan that a group of highway robbers were advancing towards us. Fear and terror filled us. A few *gendarmes*, who were supposed to escort us, fired in the air. Finally they gave us the good news that the danger had been averted and the brigands were gone, but immediately after, they started collecting, from each one of us 10-15 piasters to pay for the bullets they had wasted to protect us.

Chapter Twelve

Dipsi-Abu Harar

December 31, 1915 – May 1916

“Abou Herrera is a small locality north of Meskene on the bank of the Euphrates. It is the most complete desert. On a small hill 200 meters from the river are confined 240 Armenians under the surveillance of two gendarmes without pity, who leave them to die of hunger in the most atrocious sufferings. The scenes which I witnessed surpass all horrors.”

A. Bernau, letter sent to US Consul of Aleppo Jesse B. Jackson,
September 10, 1916.¹

Finally on the last day of December of this tragic year 1915, we reached a station called Dipsi,² where we found a huge encampment of thousands of deportees settled on the dirty and filthy land surrounded by the four corners of the town. They advised us to stay awake that night since brigands, seeking money, frequently and regularly attacked this site, while the soldiers did nothing to repel their attacks. How was it possible to spend a peaceful and restful night after such terrifying and agitating rumors, especially after hearing the real accounts of such sad events?

January 1, 1916. On the first day of this new year, as customary, we woke up at dawn witnessing the beautiful sunrise and welcoming the new year. With Father Arsen, Hapet Effendi Ghazarian and his brothers, Zakar Agha and other villagers, we gathered in our tent, in that deserted corner of Syria, to celebrate the new year after surviving one of the darkest chapters of the Armenian deportation.

¹ Sarafian, Ibid., Source NA/RG59/867.4016/302, 557.

² Situated at five hours from the camp of Meskene, from where people arrived at this station either by walking or by carts. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 657.

On this occasion, we exchanged good wishes and hoped that the New Year would be a good one.

The first day of the New Year was so beautiful that, like augurers, we took it to be a good omen and a sign for better days. With these consoling good wishes, we were hoping that 1916 would be the year of our salvation and rejuvenation, so we consoled and encouraged each other in order to strengthen our morale and endurance.

The next day, my maternal aunt's (*morakouyr*) son, Bedros Agha Varnajian, passed away. Although I was still weak and unable to move, I got up, and in order to pay my last respects to that honorable relative of ours, wrapped myself well and, leaning on a cane, accompanied Father Arsen, who undertook the funeral rites in a low profile ceremony. Thus, we surrendered another member of our family to this treacherous desert sand where by now the bones of thousands of martyred Armenians rested. We were haunted by a nightmare that very soon each one of us would be sharing the same fate.

Owing to the financial bribes we had made, we managed to rest for a few days. On the fifth day, a monstrous one-eyed *gendarme*, carrying an axe in his hand, began tearing down the tents and beating all the sick. This was the only way to execute the *Sevkiyet* for them. What a confusing situation we poor refugees were in and we truly did not know what to do. There were no means of transportation whatsoever. Before they reached our tent, I told my family to start dismantling our tents, pretending that we were gathering our belongings. And I tried to get away from the tents and look around. Yes, we were to move again, but how? Unlike the other places, here, there were neither donkeys nor camels for transport. We divided the personal effects and the food we had into parcels and put a bag on the back

of each member of the family. Two pieces were also given to two people who had nothing to carry. I carried Norair myself and holding Noubar's hand, we continued our *Way of the Cross* towards an unknown new station: Abu Harar.

I, who was not carrying anything except Norair due to my weakness, was also obliged to carry Noubar, who often complained of being tired and used to sit down, refusing to move anymore. What a painful and harsh situation. To lag behind, unable to advance or even move, surely meant exposing myself and my two children to certain danger. This was no time to ask for help from anybody; each one of us was tired yet exerted superhuman efforts to reach the next station. As for members of the family, they crushed and collapsed under the weights each was carrying, and could hardly advance.

Over and above my physical fatigue was added my psychological state of mind and my exploding heart, especially every time we saw the agonizing and supplicating faces of our friends. We had so far seen so much, but never had we been eye-witnesses to the sights we saw between Dipsi and the next station Abu Harar, around 30-35 kilometers away. All along the road, at intervals of 5 to 10 paces, we saw unburied corpses, or half buried bodies whose outer limbs were snatched by wild dogs. One corpse, after becoming the feast of vultures, was left behind torn to pieces. Further ahead, even the most stone-hearted amongst us collapsed at the sight of one man, of whom the desert monsters had only left the bust.

The same scenes continued again and again until Abu Harar. To be a human being and not to be affected, to have a heart and not to feel pain and sadness, was an impossible matter. The giant-looking *gendarmes*, with their swords and bayonets, constantly harassed the hungry, thirsty, sick and exhausted deportees to move forward. These poor people,

abandoned by God and tormented by men, in order not to fall prey to the swords, ran as much as their breaths could sustain them and then collapsed on the ground in piles of five, ten or twenty corpses at different spots along the path, and breathed their last. These scenes were a source of great joy and accomplishment to the monstrous soldiers. The corpses were also a feast for the vultures, and what greater triumph and glory for the *Ittihadî*³ murderers, who had planned and executed this unprecedented massacre of our people.

Oh God! What are you waiting for to inflict your eternal justice and punishment upon these evildoers? Isn't the time right for Him to manifest his Omnipresence and Almighty power? It was impossible for us to reconcile these atrocities and these criminal acts with the simple and straightforward teachings of the Scriptures. We were taught by the *Bible* that a people unpleasant to the great and cosmic Lord could be punished and eradicated instantly as Sodom and Gomorrah, while on the other hand, He would feed and care for his Chosen people of Israel, by giving them manna and honey, and extracting water from the rocks. At these desperate and hopeless moments, we would wonder whether we were such a terrible nation that God had chosen the *Ittihadî* leaders to manifest His anger and inflict His punishment on us, through methods and means that were unfamiliar even to Him. And if that were not the case, then why did these Armenian deportees and refugees, who had by now become victims of multiple tortures and inflictions, have their supplications and prayers unheeded and unheard? Why did the curses and the pleas that erupted like lava from our broken, tormented and torn hearts and rose to the altars of the heaven remain unanswered?⁴

³ *Ittihad wa Tarakki* is the Turkish name for the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP).

⁴ See p. 73, note 4 on Theodicy.

I have to confess that during these last days, each one of the deportees and refugees broken under the pressure of torture, fatigue and depression, had become skeptics and unbelievers, and that is how we expressed ourselves.

January 5, 1916. On Christmas Eve,⁵ we were exhausted and unable to take one further step; in this tired and defeated state we reached the place called Abu Harar, one of the main stations on *Our Way of the Cross* and situated on the banks of the Euphrates in one of the deserts of the Middle East.

The following day was Christmas Day. The blessed believers wanted to attend Mass on the occasion of Holy Christmas, with the hope of receiving some spiritual consolation. In that huge refugee camp, which had emerged in the course of a day, we chose a spot to celebrate Mass and requested a clergyman from Akshehir to conduct the service. Of our fellow compatriots from the Ovajik Church were Mihran Papazian, Vagharshag and others who assisted in the Mass, thus filling us with a sense of joy, hope and continuity. On that day there was no *Sevkiyet*.

The following morning, however, we were woken by the *gendarmes* who stopped our hearts with their bellows of '*ghalken, yekhen, chekhen*','⁶ filling the air. But we were still too tired to move and needed some more rest, so we started looking for means to extend our stay. We gave some money to the *gendarmes* who registered us - myself, my father-in-law, Father Arsen and the Ghazarians - as the cleaning and overseer employees of this refugee camp and for the time

⁵ Armenians celebrate Christmas on the 6th of January simultaneously with Epiphany. (AAE)

⁶ Odian, Ibid., 79, mentions in his memoirs these very words that the *gendarmes* "monsters" uttered all the "*way from Eski Shehir to Deir Zor*" "*Get up, Gather your Things and Move*." He specifically mentions Khoutsi effendi, the *Sevkiyet memuri* who suddenly erupted in the tents and started pulling them down creating havoc everywhere.

being we escaped *Sevkiyet*.

Afterwards I started giving medicine and treating the *gendarmes* for free and they in return allowed me to stay there. We thus succeeded in staying for a while longer as doctor and pharmacist.

One cold January night, surrounded by my loved ones while pondering about our uncertain and dangerous situation, I was summoned by the local *khan*⁷ to attend to a patient. He was, they said, a *Cherkez* (Circassian) traveler who was returning from Deir Zor to Aleppo and who was suffering from a severe throat inflammation. I gave him the required treatment and medicine for free and the man was so happy that in recognition he advised me to avoid going to Deir Zor, and in the event this was impossible, *not to cross the Deir Zor bridge at any cost*, because the cemetery and the slaughterhouse of the poor Armenian refugees were *beyond* the bridge. He also immediately wrote me a recommendation to give to his relative who was a commander in Deir Zor, to find me a house there and to spare me from the *Sevkiyet*.

Completely hopeless and heartbroken, I returned to my tent and relayed to Father Arsen all that had been told to me. By now there was no more doubt that we were to be deported, tortured and massacred, but what could we do? To run away was impossible; our only chance was to find means of not advancing towards Deir Zor and to delay it as much as possible at the tremendous financial cost of generously bribing the *gendarmes* and the soldiers. Whenever they needed any medical assistance or drugs, day and night, they rushed to me and I tried by all means to keep them satisfied. A few months later, I was elected supervisor of cleanliness and hygiene of the tents. Later I also succeeded in making

⁷ An inn.

our friend Hagop Agha Ghazarian the *bekchibashi* (Head Watchman) of the guards of our camp. Thus we managed to stay six months in Abu Harar, living under tents, and had the good fortune of not being sent to the hellish Deir Zor.

But how we spent these months and what atrocities and horrible sights we witnessed, I will mention only a few for the sake of maintaining sanity and dignity. First let me say that during these six months, the refugee caravans passed by continuously on a daily basis, often staying for one night and resuming their journey the next day. Every morning, the monstrous *gendarmes* attacked the tents with their bayonets and whips and beat their occupants. Sometimes they would set fire indiscriminately to the tents, including the tents of those who were sick and could not move, without checking who was under them, and sending them to their immediate death. But to whom were we to protest and complain! For any such claim would have surely meant sharing the same fate of those victims.

Every morning, we witnessed a recurrence of the same horrible scenes. Already those who had reached this camp alive were totally wasted and spent, with no energy; therefore, when they were forced into *Sevkiyet*, they dropped after a few steps and waited for salvation and relief in death. Very few were those who could continue their journey on horse or mule. During the interval of our stay there, we saw hundreds of thousands of refugees who came to and left this station, which, for many, became their last.

Every morning, special corpse gatherers would collect the dead and pile them up in a huge hole. Those who could afford a few piasters requested that their loved ones be buried in individual graves and benefited from the few murmuring prayers of a priest. Often with extreme pain and suffering we visited these bodies who, due to hunger,

fatigue and cold had melted and become living skeletons on which thousands of maggots were already feasting. As an eye witness, I looked at these and reflected that soon, if the same conditions continued much longer, we too would look like these.

Often we watched a *gendarme* go into the less protected and abandoned tents, choose a few girls and take them to his quarters where they were to serve as his own private slave girls. Boiling with feelings of anger, revenge and hatred, we could not do anything and felt helpless for not being able to avenge all our people.

Regarding the necessity of food and its availability, the first few months were very difficult. The surrounding nomad Arabs, being scared of the *gendarmes*, did not dare sell us anything. Later, as a result of our pleas and petitions, the *gendarmes* sent special people to the Arabs informing them that there was no need to fear and that they could come and sell us whatever we wanted. Thus we started acquiring essential products like flour, milk, yoghurt, eggs and lamb. Those who still had a few coins left could sustain themselves a bit more and therefore extend their lives for a short time longer. But until when could we survive? We did not know. On the other hand, those who were now completely devoid of any financial means, survived a few more days either by begging food or by eating grass before throwing themselves into the lap of merciful death.

April 1916. The Euphrates river, rising with the waters of the Armenian Highlands and passing before our eyes, had become a sad, silent eyewitness to the deportation and eradication of the Armenian people. One morning, as usual, I was carrying my jug to fill water from the river when I watched a refugee in rags (for we were by now all of us refugees in rags) take a piece of dried bread, soak it

in a bowl and eat it. Then he threw the bowl into the river, and making the sign of the cross three times, attempted to commit suicide by throwing himself in the Euphrates. Sometimes, he tried to keep his head above water but later gave in to the current which pushed him to the riverbank. We rushed to pull him out and after rejuvenating him we asked him why he had attempted suicide; he replied that it was his only way to salvation. "I am in a desperate financial and physical situation, I cannot walk; isn't it better if I put an end to this difficult life and be free?" The man was right, and probably, many, thinking like him, had sought relief and shelter in the Armenian waters of the Euphrates or found relief in the treacherous sands of the desert. (Pl. XXI)

How many, how many respectable Armenian maidens and virgins had surrendered themselves to the saving Euphrates rather than allow their bodies to be violated by these monstrous giants? To how many hopeless and helpless Armenian deportees had the Euphrates widely opened its generous lap? From the Armenian provinces to Baghdad, the blood of how many thousand innocent Armenians was flowing with the murky waters of the river? The Euphrates - that living eye-witness - was going to become in the near future the just judge and eye witness of the Armenian people.⁸

During the month of April, all eight members of my family, - my wife, Noubar, Norair, my mother-in-law, my father-in-law and my sisters / brother-in-law, - fell sick and for many days I had to take care and treat them all as much as possible. After healing them, I myself fell sick during the month of May and all hope of recovery was lost since there was no doctor and no one who could treat me. The temperature in the tent was about 45 degrees. Naturally I was not in shape to take care of myself. Based on my experi-

⁸ Jacques Der Alexanian, *Ibid.*, 362.

ence and that of some friends who had some knowledge about pharmacy, I knew I had to move a little bit and not remain idle.

Finally, after three weeks of struggling between life and death, I had the good fortune to recover. But I was completely drained of strength and energy and could hardly walk. Because staying in the tent had become unbearable during daytime, I sometimes, accompanied Father Arsen and walked along the river bank or go to the *khan* to cool down in one of the rooms.

Towards the end of May, a military delegation from Meskene arrived in Abu Harar to select all the professionals and artisans from among the Armenian refugees and transport them to Meskene to give them work. I, also, as a certified pharmacist, presented myself and registered my name.

Chapter Thirteen

*Meskene-Aleppo*¹

June 9 – July 28, 1916

“The destination of all those Armenians is Aleppo. Here they are kept crowded in all available vacant houses, khans, Armenian churches, courtyards and open lots. Their condition in Aleppo is beyond description.”

Walter. G. Geddes²

On June 9, 1916, special carriages were sent from Meskene to transport the professionals and artisans. I, with all the members of the family, thus returned to Meskene. I was elated and hoped that we were taking the first steps to return to Aleppo and gradually would end our terrifying and hellish fate. This was a good omen for better days to come, since we were returning from the road to the slaughterhouse. However, when we arrived at Meskene, the military commander³ looked at me very coldly and ordered me to return to Abu Harar in the next two days, arguing that my presence with this group had been a mistake. Apparently his aim was to collect a bribe, as I learned later, but I was

¹ The Syrian city where most of the survivors of the Genocide first landed and where orphanages were established to take care of all the deported children. A compelling account of the situation is described by Martin Niepage, a German teacher in the city in 1917 in *The Horrors of Aleppo, Seen by a German Eye-Witness, a word to Germany's accredited representatives*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1916); H. Kaiser, *At the Crossroads of Der Zor*, 3, comments “At one crucial location, the city of Aleppo, the struggle began not simply for the survival of individual deportees, but for what Armenian relief workers understood to be the survival of their whole nation.”

² Sarafian, *Ibid.*, Source: NA/RG59/867/243, 381.

³ The cherkez (Circassian) Hussein Bey is appointed as *Sevkiyet memuri* at Meskene in January 1916 and remains there till December 1916. Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 655.

in a state of total collapse and depression, for to return to Abu Harar surely meant certain death.

To find means of avoiding this, I immediately appealed to the commander through the mediation of his “arak companions”: the *aghas* of Akshehir and Adabazar. The mediation succeeded and I was allowed to stay in Meskene without undertaking any specific job. Due to the medicines I had ordered from Aleppo for fifteen gold coins, I managed to survive and feed my family. However, two weeks later, the one bearing the title of official doctor in Meskene, a heartless Armenian impostor claiming to be *Hadjentsi Avedis*,⁴ reported my activities to the commander, who immediately confiscated my medicine, depriving me and my family of any means of financial subsistence.

That same vile and heartless crook had been seen selling tea to the poor refugees on the roads to torture, and news of his inhumane and unethical practices had reached us all the way to Abu Harar. This bloodthirsty Armenian had robbed the poor refugees of their few coins and duped them with promises of salvation, not even taking into consideration the starving sick who were in need of their daily bread. It goes without saying that from his earnings a percentage was given to the officers and the *gendarmes* as commission.

On these unfortunate days, an example of this man's vile practices was related to me. From our *Adabazartsi* friend Zareh Kochian and from his in-laws, *Hadjentsi Avedis* had collected, in one month, the amount of 21 gold coins as the

⁴ Odian, *Ibid.*, 169-171, mentions meeting in El Bousera on the Habur river (a tributary of the Euphrates), a traitor from Hadjen named Santour Oghlu Aram, who boasted of his treacherous acts and of the fact that he had worked in the pharmacy of an Armenian Protestant in Mersin, whose pharmacy he eventually burnt after stealing its contents. It is not certain whether this Aram and the impostor Avedis were one and the same person. (AAE)

cost of medicines, and none of his patients had survived. Many such heartless and immoral stories about his indecent and illegal modes of profit were repeated everyday. As partner in his gains, he had recruited Krikor, the son of our friend Minas Seropian from Arslanbeg, who had opted to remain silent due to the difficult days and situation we were living.

That Avedis, that monster, had found means of profiteering from the poor refugees who were already afflicted by so many epidemics like typhoid, typhus, severe dysentery, tuberculosis and other diseases. The number of the victims of such diseases had reached the hundreds, and in every tent there was at least one sick person. With no doctor, no drugs, and no treatment, the refugees were compelled to turn to that monster for help, and give him the price he demanded in return for a piece of bread. That monster not only lacked a conscience, but also had no fear that anybody would challenge his status in Meskene, since the major part of his ill-gotten profits were extravagantly spent every night on feeding and entertaining the Turkish employees. Eventually the truth came out, and the authorities in Aleppo officially revealed his imposture as a doctor. Of course, I was very happy to hear that, but there was nothing I could do since all my drugs had already been confiscated.

Every day, I used to spend my time visiting the occupants of the nearby tents: the spiritual pastor, Prelate Father Stepanos,⁵ as well as the father of the priest Seropé Bourmanian and other friends from Adabazar. But I was still worried and kept thinking of a way out of this situation. If we continued without any occupation, the whole family was going to be subjected to hunger. Finally, I contemplated the idea of acquiring a job in Aleppo. This was my and my family's only means of salvation, but how was I to get there? It was

⁵ Father Stepanos Hovagimian, Prelate of Izmit.

strictly forbidden for any refugee to enter the city without official authorization.

Making use of the absence of the officer, I asked his assistant to permit me to go to Aleppo, claiming that I would collect some money that was waiting for me there and return to Meskene.

On July 13, 1916, leaving my wife and sons Noubar and Norair in Meskene under the protection of my father-in-law, I left with three *Izmitsi* friends to Aleppo. On the way we were subjected to terror and fear, when the Arab tribe known as Enezé⁶ followed our cart at full speed to rob us and probably kill us. However, our cart driver, Souren from Adabazar, was very skillful and drove the cart at full speed for three hours without slowing down so that the robbers could not catch up with us.

In the evening when we reached a *khan*, one of our horses died of extreme exhaustion. The next morning, the charioteer was obliged to acquire another horse so that we would continue our way to Aleppo that night. At Aleppo also the *gendarmes*, the policemen and the guards were pursuing the Armenians, busy arresting all the refugees

⁶ Many survivors' memoirs refer to this Arab tribe and its infamous reputation for plunder and murder. cf. Vahram Dadrian, *Ibid.*, 182, mentions, "*In the morning of the same day, [November 1916], hundreds of Chechen and Enezé highwaymen rounded up more than 60,000 refugees [in the Deir Zor area] and drove them under cracking whips, along the bank of a out-of-the way river toward the interior of the desert,*" *Ibid.*, 328, "*In the solitude of the desert Enezé and Chechen thieves suddenly surrounded the caravan and began to kill them with swords, axes and bullets.*" (9 March 1919). Also, Odian, *Ibid.*, 187, describes this Arab pillaging tribe, who not only robbed the Armenians and kidnapped their women and children, but had even stolen thousands of cattle and 3,200 horses belonging to the Ottoman army, 187, 222, 228. Stanley Kerr in *The Lions of Marash, Personal Experiences with American Near East Relief 1919-1922*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973), mentions Hashem Bey, chief of the Enezé tribe in 1920, who "*was one of the most important opponents of the French occupation, help the Turks to oust the French from Aintab.*"

who did not have permits, imprisoning them and finally sending them to Deir Zor.

At first I sank deep into depression, but to have reached Aleppo only to return to Meskene without any solution would have been the greatest proof of my failure and helplessness. Therefore, ignoring all dangers and risks, I decided to stay in Aleppo and apply to positions in official circles. Among the friends who had accompanied me, some were obliged to return to Meskene for the second time. Whereas I, upon the recommendation of some friends and acquaintances, made contacts at night when the pursuing and control slackened. In order to acquire a position as a military pharmacist, I made the necessary contacts and applications, even in broad daylight, at great risk and fear of being arrested at any moment.

Sometimes, I also visited the pharmacy of Roupen Effendi Ezadjian,⁷ where I met a number of other refugee pharmacists who complained about their search for work having been fruitless. However, I refused to be defeated and continued to make contacts day and night through people of good status. Finally, after spending ten days uninterruptedly looking for a position, I presented my recommendations and affidavits to official circles.

Eventually, I was accepted to the position of military pharmacist and permission was granted to me to travel to Jerusalem in my newly assigned duty there. I was eternally

⁷ An Armenian pharmacist in Aleppo, graduate of the American University of Beirut in 1901.cf. *American University Alumni Directory*, (Beirut: 1992), 92. The picture of R. Ezadjian on Pl.V of this work is taken from *Albom Amerigyan Hamalsarani Hay Shrshnavardnerou* (AUB Album of Armenian Graduates), (Maarad, Beirut: Azad Pres, 1935); Odian, Ibid., 103, mentions visiting the pharmacy of Roupen Effendi in Aleppo, which was a meeting place for the Armenian doctors. His son, Bedros Ezadjian, was for long years, the superintendent of Haigazian University in Lebanon.(AAE)

grateful to the old military physician *Kaïmakam* Baghdassar Bey, who did not spare any means or effort to find me a position. I immediately went to an Armenian tailor in Aleppo to have my military uniform made.

On July 25, 1916, wearing my military uniform, I took a deep breath and roamed freely in Aleppo, without any fear of being followed or arrested. I felt reborn again; I became a new man. Before leaving Aleppo for my newly assigned post in Jerusalem, I wrote an official letter to the Military Governor requesting him to transport my family from the Meskene deserts to Aleppo. After working for three days on these formalities, I was advised to go to Jerusalem and apply from there. However, I did succeed in getting a cable sent by the head of the refugee commission to Meskene requesting that my family not be sent to *Sevkiyet* until the official *vesika*, confirming their belonging to a military family, was issued to them. Satisfied with this situation, relieved and comforted, I left for Jerusalem on Sunday, July 28, 1916.

In the train, I was accompanied by our honorable compatriot, Levon Effendi Zakarian, travelling under the new name forced upon him, Ali Haydar Bey. He was on his way to Tripoli to assume his new position as inspector of the Sericulture Department.⁸

⁸ Odian, *Ibid.*, 66, 118, mentions Levon Zakarian, who was with him in Eregli in September 1915 and who later assumed the name of Ali Haydar Bey. He became the inspector of the Sericulture Department of the Public Debt Administration and often traveled between Aleppo, Hama and Beirut.

Chapter Fourteen

Jerusalem

August 3, 1916 – January 19, 1919

On August 3, 1916, I finally reached Jerusalem and immediately went to *Sourp Hagop* (St. James) Church in the Armenian Convent,¹ where with great pomp and ceremony they were celebrating the installation of their new Patriarch, the Catholicos Sahag of Sis,² exiled by the Turks. It was a welcoming surprise to attend this event that uplifted my spirits and consoled my mind, especially after *walking to our Golgotha* for long months, witnessing and being exposed to horrible scenes. Here was I in the Holy Land, at this Holy site of St. James, a spectator to such a great event. (Pl. VI)

After the church ceremony, I was led to the room of my former employer in Bolis, Onnig Effendi Kurdian.³ Soon we were joined by another compatriot Deacon Boghos Varjian, and we reminisced about our past and present. After spending one evening at the inn in the Convent, I moved to the room assigned to me by the priests.

On Monday, August 4, I presented my affidavits and the recommendations I had gathered from Aleppo to the *Menzili* Chief Physician and was selected to become military pharmacist at the *Bilingi Waten Khastakhanesi*, the former French Hospital, where I started working on the same day. My happiness was truly indescribable, but my main worry and concern now was to get my family out of the Meskene

¹ The Armenian Convent (*Vank*) in Jerusalem is more of a small town incorporating the Patriarchate, 2 Churches, a Seminary, a School, a Library, cemeteries in addition to around 300 rooms rented to civilians.(AAE).

² Sahag II Khabayan was the last Catholicos in Sis, Cilicia. (AAE)

³ Pharmacist from Izmit, where Arsenian worked in 1902, see p. 33.

desert and join with me as soon as possible. Two days later, I presented a petition to *Menzili Mufattesh* (the local inspector), Rushen Bey, requesting the transfer of my family to Jerusalem. For a whole month I waited impatiently for a response to my petition.

Finally, I received a cable from Meskene, stating that there was great fear that they will soon be taken into *Sevkiyet*. Disheartened and distressed, I went to meet with Rushen Bey; the telegram in my hand and tears in my eyes, I begged and pleaded with him to save my family from danger and grant me a *vesika* to allow them to join me. He was a kind-hearted man with a conscience, so he immediately wrote a cable addressed to the Prefect of Aleppo and gave it to me to take it to the post office. At the same time, he was generous enough to give me a fifteen-day leave to go to Aleppo and bring my family to Jerusalem.

On September 14, I left for Aleppo and the journey to reach my family as soon as possible was full of trouble. On the 18th, I reached Aleppo, where Vramshabuh Seropian gave me the good news that my family had already arrived and that they were staying at such and such *khan*. I rushed there and oh, what great joy and fortune it was to find them all alive: my wife Hrout, my Noubar and Norair, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law, my brother-in-law and my two sisters-in-law⁴ who were all allowed to go to Aleppo based on my petitions. Not wanting to waste a moment, we took the train the very same evening to Jerusalem. On the way, we spent two days in Damascus and one day at the house of the wife of our friend *Fezji*⁵ Manoug in Deraa⁶.

⁴ Krikor, Serpouhi, Simon, Verkine and Victoria Gulemerian.(AAE)

⁵ See p. 13, note 13.

⁶ A railway station on the Syrian-Jordanian borders. (Map 3, insert)

Finally on September 25, 1916, we all arrived in Jerusalem. I was by now relaxed and my mind was at peace. I felt an inner happiness that I had succeeded in saving myself and the eight members of my family from the slaughterhouse, simply by a stroke of luck. After fourteen months of deadly and torturous exile, arriving in Jerusalem and settling as a family in one of the quarters of the Armenian Convent was of the utmost bliss and happiness. Gone were the fearful swords and bayonets of the *gendarmes*, gone were the *gachken*, *khekhen*, *chekhen* shouts which struck us like lightning and filled us with terror and fear. Gone were the insecure days and the deadly Damoclean sword⁷ which had haunted us for weeks. Also gone were our marching days like the errant Jew - walk, walk, always walk. Now my mind was preoccupied with all the family members and friends we had left behind, and who still did not have the good fortune of escaping that destructive, painful fate.

Towards the end of December 1916, I received new orders to leave the hospital and join the third contingent (*Firqa*) recovery center *Niqahat khane*, which used to be in the suburbs of Jerusalem in the Jewish quarter of Bukharlare. At the beginning, this change affected me very negatively; however, later I was very happy because the work was not too tiring and I could also benefit from food rationing, *erzag*, to sustain a family of eight, since the market was extremely expensive and buying anything during wartime was very difficult.

Ten months after settling in Jerusalem, on the night of November 6, 1917, we received military orders that we were to be drafted immediately because the British army

⁷ Another survivor, Vahram Dadrian, Ibid., 105, uses the same words upon reaching Jerash (Jordan), "*No more will the terror of massacre hang over our heads like the sword of Damocles.*"

was advancing towards Jerusalem.⁸ I was extremely worried and in a dilemma: should I take my family with me or leave them at the Convent. After thinking it over for twenty-four hours and consulting with my friends, I finally decided to leave alone.

The city of Jerusalem was in great turmoil as all the Turkish soldiers were in a hurry to withdraw. On the morning of November 9, 1917, I unhappily parted from my family and walked with the soldiers towards Nablus, a difficult and tiring distance of 60 kilometers to the North.

On the evening of Sunday, November 10, 1917, rumors began circulating that the British army had reached Wadi Sarar.⁹ Grippled by the fear of being separated for long periods from my family and using the pretext that I needed urgently to be with them, I obtained permission from the military head and took a carriage to return to Jerusalem that night. However, halfway through the journey, I started reflecting on the gravity of the mistake I would be committing by this act and the exposure of my life to great danger, so I returned to Nablus. After managing to collect enough food rations, I remained there with the other soldiers, until one evening we received orders to proceed to Mas'oudiye¹⁰ station on foot. There was torrential rain, and the night was dark and thick; the roads were full of mud that reached up to our knees, but we had to obey since this was a military command.

The next morning we reached Mas'oudiye, muddy and drenched. The same day we were sent by train to Damascus, and when we stopped for a few hours in Deraa, I went to visit my friends there. However, when I returned, I found

⁸ As a military pharmacist in Jerusalem, Arsenian ironically had to serve in the IVth Unit of the Ottoman Army against the Allied Forces. (AAE)

⁹ Station in the region of Beersheba in Southern Palestine. (AAE)

¹⁰ Mas'oudiye was a city in Palestine around 5 kilometers north-east of Jaffa. (AAE)

to my great dismay that the train had already left with all my personal belongings. For two days, I did not move from the station, sleeping in the open air, in that cold weather, with neither a blanket nor my coat, both of which were in the wagons of the train. I shall never forget that first night through which I shivered until morning. Finally, two nights later, I rejoined my contingent and soon we were officially notified that the British had occupied Jerusalem on December 9, 1917. (Pl. VIII)

On the one hand, I was extremely worried about my family's safety; on the other hand, I felt comfort that my family was saved and would no longer face the danger of war and hunger. For ten months, I ached to see my children, as I remained separated from my family getting not a single word from them.

I went to the office of the Red Crescent and paid five Turkish pounds when I heard that I could get news of people from the occupied countries through the International Red Cross.¹¹ But months passed by and I was still without news of my family in Jerusalem. Sometimes I thought of defying all dangers and taking the risk of deserting the army and joining my family. But I still lacked the courage for such a reckless impulse. Although I was worried about them and wanted to join them, I feared for myself. To expose my life to danger now was foolhardy, especially that the Turks were still suspicious of Armenian soldiers and were waiting for a chance to arrest us, particularly as we were getting news that the Armenians had started revenge raids on the Caucasian front.

¹¹ In March, 1918, the American Red Cross sent a Commission to operate in Palestine and the Near East. The Commission reached Port Said on June 11 and commenced active operations in Jerusalem on July 4, 1918. *The Work of the American Red Cross during the War*. Chapter V: <http://www.vlib.us/medical/ARC/ARC5.htm> (October 2010).

One day, I completely lost my mind when I heard that the leader of all criminals, Enver Pasha, had ordered that all Armenian soldiers, without exception, be gathered and sent to the forced labor *ameleh* troops, which meant another way of totally annihilating us. They had done this before in what was known as the White massacre, when they had exterminated thousands of young Armenian men, sending them to dig impossible roads and exposing them to extreme hardship without water and bread.¹²

One day in Damascus, the Turks started indiscriminately arresting Armenian refugee families, without differentiating adults, infants, males or females. The police and the *gendarmes* were active in executing this plan to spread terror and fear everywhere. For the past three years, after being subjected to all forms of torture and persecution, only a handful of the Armenian people had survived by pure chance and luck, despite all the dangers; now here again the Turks were determined to destroy what was left of these refugees through monstrous means and practices.

The Armenians we used to see in the market, the shop owners, the family men, were all being arrested and thrown into dark prisons. For 24 hours these insane, massive campaigns continued. Later, we did not know why, the persecutions slowed down, perhaps owing to German and Austrian mediation. The women and children were set free and only the men of military age were detained. I was haunted by the idea that very soon I too would definitely be arrested, and a new misfortune would befall me.

One day in early September, my commander informed me that I had received orders to proceed to the war front to join the 8th Command. I concluded that this was a plot hatched

¹² G. Balakian, *Ibid.*, 291-294.

by my commander as a result of the personal antagonism he bore towards me. I was extremely upset and depressed. Undoubtedly this time the danger of dying was unavoidable as we used to receive, on a daily basis, the sad news of the demise of many of our military acquaintances who had been martyred at the front. What caused my deepest pain was the fact that after having miraculously survived so many dangers and atrocities in the past three years, now that freedom was so close, I had to go to the battlefield and die without even having the chance of seeing my loved ones for the last time.

On September 12, 1918, I bid farewell to all my friends, and met with the Reverend Father Garabed Mazlounian at the Prelacy. I said goodbye to him and with eyes full of tears, I gave him my will, stating that in the event of my death, he should ensure the education and care of my children Noubar and Norair. (Pl. IX)

The following day, on September 13, I moved with my mates from Damascus to Tulkarem¹³ where the military operations headquarters were located. The next day, we stopped at the station of Samakh on the banks of the Tiberias sea. I so wished to visit the city of Tiberias where my friends Onnig Kambourian's and Garabed Dayan's families resided. We took a trip by ferry on the lake and for a while, I felt I was transported back to the Sea of Marmara, in Izmit. That evening I stayed at the Dayans and early the following morning, with my friend Onnig, I visited the mineral spas and then took the train to Tulkarem.

On September 16, 1918, I reached Tulkarem and presented my affidavit. For a couple of days, I was obliged to stay as a "guest" in the house of Major Awni Bey,¹⁴ whom I knew

¹³ City in Central Palestine, 15 kilometers east of the Mediterranean Sea. (AAE)

¹⁴ Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide*, 472, mentions a Dr. Awni Bey, who was the Inspector of the Sanitary Services.

from Izmit, until my new post was assigned to me.

On Thursday morning, September 19, we jumped out of bed at the sound of cannon balls. The massive assault of the British army had already started on this front. Moved by curiosity, we went up to the roof and watched the whole battlefield in front of us.

This time the Turkish soldiers around me, filled with hatred and revenge, admitted their fear about this being the final and decisive battle of the British.

The cannon offensive continued for many hours, striking the Turkish front. A little while later, havoc was sown among the Turkish soldiers of Tulkarem; there was chaos everywhere, and the soldiers' main concern was to escape and desert the army. I, pretending to be unaware of all this, appealed to my superior to send me to the medical post assigned to me. Since everybody was fleeing, this was a way to save face. The man looked at me, smiled at my *naïveté* and as he packed and prepared to flee, he said he would shortly send me to my post.

Soon “the enemy”¹⁵ planes flew over and bombarded all of Tulkarem. Awni Bey, his brother-in-law and I crawled under the heavy walls of the building, hiding and trembling at the realization of the magnitude of imminent danger. When the air raids ceased for a while, we took advantage of the situation and went to the market. On our way we saw a lot of people killed by the raids. Suddenly, the bombardment resumed fiercer than before and upon the recommendation of some Armenian soldiers, I joined them and we took shelter in a cave outside the town where we stayed for a couple of terrifying hours. It was impossible to get out of the cave for the British planes were flying like swallows all over to stop

¹⁵ The Allied Forces.

the escape of Turkish soldiers. The bombs fell like hail, and we, sitting in this hermit-like position, waited for the danger to abate a little in order to get out of the cave and run to the quarters where one of the soldiers told me that all the others had gone. The situation was quite critical. What should I do? Stay there, defect and hide, or join the retreating armies. In both situations, the danger was inevitable. I stayed a while longer with the soldiers under the thick walls and an hour later decided to retreat as well.

The planes over Tulkarem were flying very low and firing bullets on the retreating soldiers. We sometimes had to take shelter in the shadow of the stone buildings, but our slowing down was looked upon by the Turkish soldiers as a suspicious and treacherous move which was not in our interest at this stage. Units of British soldiers had by now advanced towards the town and we could see the reflection of their swords in the distance. One needed to have a bit of courage and stamina in order to be saved, but it was dangerous. Carrying some of my belongings, while the rest was carried by my companion, we slowly retreated by crawling on the ground, and in spite of the terrifying shower of bullets over us, we finally succeeded in getting out of Tulkarem.

Everywhere around me, we could see numerous wounded men and horses. Gripped by the fear and terror of being shot at any minute, we were suddenly stopped by two horsemen who halted our advance and asked us to raise our hands. Was this real or a dream? Had I really fallen prisoner to the Allied forces? One spoke English, the other French. As I was emotionally in a traumatized condition and filled with fear and sadness, tears began flowing down my cheeks. Finally, without danger, and without sacrificing my life, I had been liberated and granted freedom and salvation.

This was the utmost bliss since we were now in a free

and safe area: no more bombs and cannon balls shelling us. We were on safe heights controlled by the British, while on the other side were the retreating defeated Turkish soldiers at whom the British were still firing. My inner happiness was indescribable, especially when I thought that soon I would see my loved ones; hence, in this happy mood I marched with thousands of prisoners of war like me. The roads were littered with the guns, carts, and belongings of the retreating soldiers, slowing us down and making our movement forward difficult.

On the eve of that Thursday, September 19, 1918, after walking for six hours towards the sea, we once again received orders to return to the Tulkarem railway station where we were left without water the whole evening. We spent the following day, Friday, sitting under the sun, hungry and very thirsty, for the Turks had destroyed all the water tanks before retreating. I took out the phial of tartaric acid from my medicine case and put a few drops in my mouth to quench my thirst. I felt extremely ill those past two past days: the anxiety, the thirst, the hunger and fatigue, in addition to sleeplessness, had affected my health and I could not take another step forward.

Fortunately, on Friday evening we were transported in huge vehicles to Ras-el-Ain, where the officers were separated from the soldiers, and settled in areas surrounded by barbed wire. For the first time they gave us processed meat, *galette*¹⁶ and unlimited water, and each Prisoner Of War (POW), for a while, forgot his state and enjoyed the meal.

We spent that night in open air, and on Saturday morning, September 21, I woke up feeling ill and very weak. We were now POWs without any free will. I had managed to save

¹⁶ Round loaf of bread, from French *galette*. (AAE)

only my luggage from all my personal belongings and had to carry it myself wherever I went since I did not have any attendants. We were now arranged in rows of two and had to walk for hours. The heat was unbearable; there was no water and the *matara* cup¹⁷ was sold for one Turkish pound.

The proud Turkish generals of the Ottoman empire, who arrogantly used to humiliate and torture us Armenians, were now walking with drooping heads, unable to bear the heat and the hunger, fainting and collapsing every now and then on the ground. I moved forward with my inseparable bag and occasionally took a few drops of tartaric acid which, due to its soothing effect, allowed me to walk on and quench my thirst. Among all these soldiers, I was the only one who carried his personal effects and walked until we reached a station; we took the train and arrived at Lydda¹⁸ station towards evening.

The next day, Sunday, September 22, the official registration of the POWs took place and tags bearing our numbers were placed on our chests. The same evening we were transported by train to Kantara, travelling all night through the desert and passing by all the stations of the Turkish army, such as Gaza, Rafah, el-Arish and others, until we reached the Asian bank of the Suez Canal, where a large camp was set up for the POWs at the British Army Base.

We remained at the camp there for nine days. One evening it rained so heavily, drenching all our tents and flooding them, that we were forced to spend the whole night on our feet.

On the morning of October 2, 1918, we crossed the wooden bridge from the Asian side of the Suez Canal to the African side and took the train along the desert route which took us through the major Egyptian cities of Ismailiya,

¹⁷ A small metallic cup.

¹⁸ Modern Lod, city in South Palestine. (AAE)

Zagazeg and Benha. After reaching the station at Quweisna, we had to walk to the POW camp which was half an hour away. Overburdened by my bag filled with medicines, I moved exhausted towards the barracks which were surrounded by barbed wire. From then on we were officially prisoners and treated accordingly.

A few days later, I presented a petition to my superior requesting that the necessary procedures be carried out to allow me to join my family in Jerusalem. For a long time, my request remained unanswered, although I was summoned a few times and questioned by the head of the POW camp. Life there was extremely difficult to bear, but we, the forty-five Armenian officers, settled in a special quarter and more or less tried to make our lives pleasant by exercising, singing, dancing, learning English and passing the time. In the evening, we sometimes had gatherings and tea parties.

On the feast of St. James (*Sourp Hagop*), since I was away from my *Home Sweet Home*, and since memories of previous celebrations would haunt my mind and depress me, I decided to hold a tea party at the camp and invited all my Armenian friends. Despite limited resources, we had a very pleasant evening singing and reciting poetry, and for a short while, I pretended I was back home with my family.

One day, we read in the Armenian newspaper we had received from Cairo, the declaration of Noubar Pasha announcing the independence of Free Armenia.¹⁹ To celebrate our happiness, we decided to have a collective celebration. Some of the Armenians who had so far hardly uttered a single word were now inspired to make speeches, recite poetry and sing Armenian patriotic songs. This celebra-

¹⁹ Armenia declared its independence on May 28, 1918. Cf. Christopher J. Walker, *Armenia, The Survival of a Nation*, (England: Revised Second Edition, Routledge, 1990), 256-257.

tion extremely provoked the Turkish inmates and made them very infuriated. Getting a hundred Turks together, they plotted to attack us, but as we were told the next day, their leader advised them to control themselves and dismissed them to their quarters. Nevertheless, a messenger was sent to us requesting our leader to put an end to our partying.

The name of the Armenians who were with me as Prisoners of War are listed on the last page of my book. (142-145)

The only way to get out of this camp was to appeal to the National Higher Commission of the ruling government in Cairo, not the military. Therefore, based on my petitions and the ones sent on my behalf from Jerusalem to that same office in Cairo, I was finally released when my papers reached me. Krikor Khatcherian, whose family was also in Jerusalem, was released with me too. On January 7, 1919, we reached Jerusalem escorted by two soldiers.

My happiness was beyond description for after such stormy and eventful times, I was lucky to be alive and see my loved ones again. Upon my return to the family, I received the sad news of the passing away of my father-in-law; and thus, of the nine family members that had reached Jerusalem from Izmit, we were reduced to eight.

We thanked God that we were all together to celebrate the Armenian New Year (January 14) and the Armenian Christmas (January 19) of 1919,²⁰ which I spent surrounded by my family in the happy and peaceful atmosphere of the Armenian Convent of the Holy City of Jerusalem. (Pl. VI)

²⁰ The Armenians of Jerusalem to date continue to adhere to the Julian Calendar which has a 13 day difference from the current adopted Gregorian Calendar. Accordingly, New Year's day is celebrated on January 14 and Christmas on the 19th instead of the 6th of January.

List of Armenian Prisoners of War

Egypt - 1918

Name		Profession	Provenance
1	Krikor Baghdassarian	Captain, Veterinary	Aintab
2	Vahe Chopurian	Sergeant major	Bolis
3	Levon Seferian	Sergeant major	Bardizag
4	Krikor Sarkissian	Sergeant major, Pharmacist	Pangalti
5	Krikor Pederian	"	Shishli
6	Krikor Khatcherian	"	Edirne
7	Harutiun Beshirian	"	Kadikeuy
8	Harutiun Topalajian	"	Adabazar
9	Harutiun Sarkissian	"	Roshun Keopru
10	Roupen Sarrafian	"	Damascus
11	Penyamin Israelian	"	Geyve
12	Zareh Ashekian	"	Akshehir
13	Hovsep Chekherdeman	"	Hadjen
14	Bedros Soukyassian	"	Damascus
15	Apel Kalesdian	"	Afion Karahisar
16	Roupen Markarian	Dentist	Antioch
17	Kevork Kerkiasharian	"	Hadjen
18	Aram Yessayan		Yozgat
19	Vahan Garabedian		Yozgat
20	Zaven Papazian		Dardanelles
21	Haig Beguian	Lawyer	Bolis
22	Harutiun Boyajian		Iscudari
23	Hamazasp Panossian		Izmit

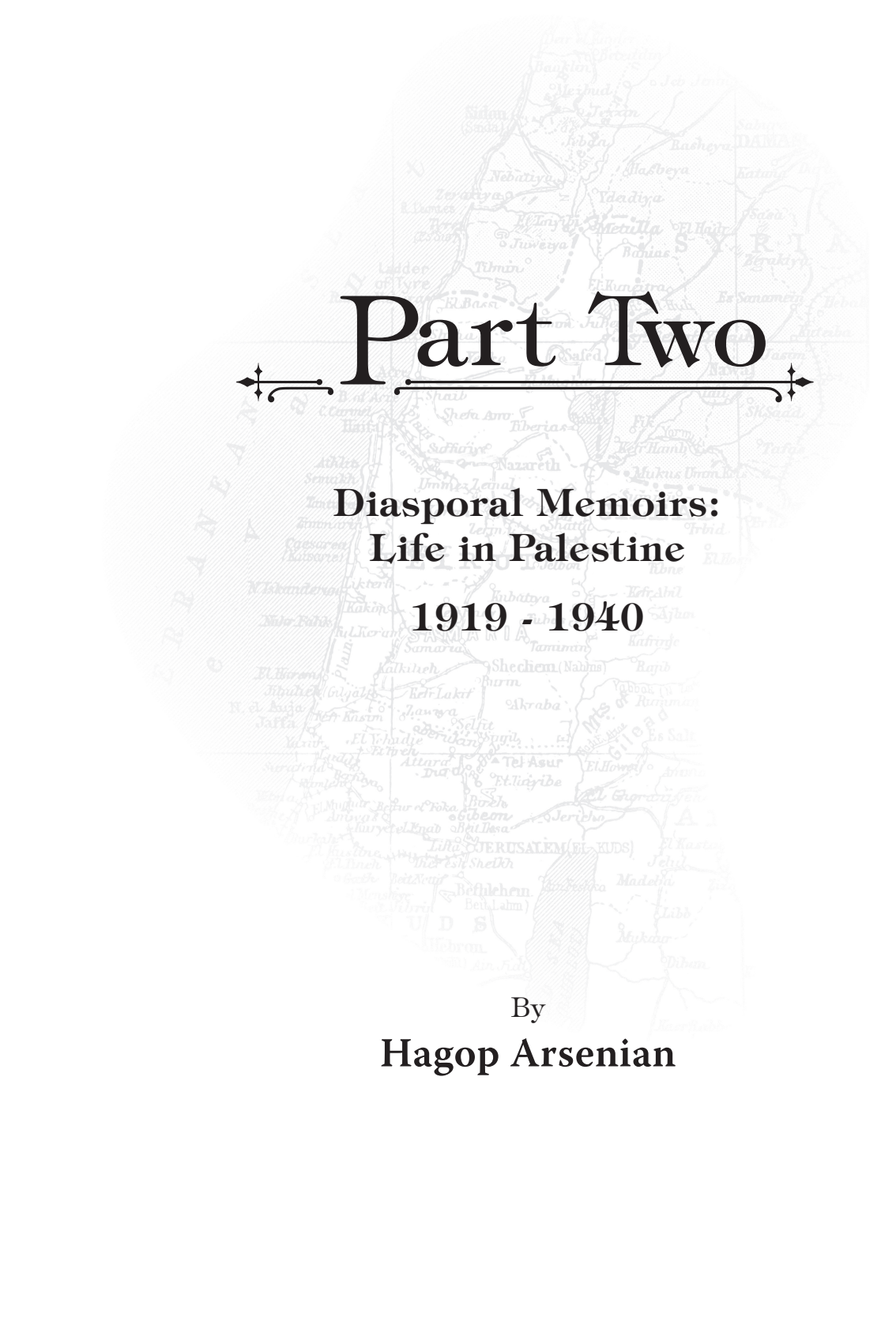
	Name	Profession	Provenance
24	Hamazasp N. Hagopian		Bardizag
25	Nigoghos Karajian		Seolioz
26	Markar Karakashian		Urfa
27	Karnig Tahmizian	Architect	Kayseri
28	Aram Kh. Keshishian		Marash
29	Noubar Aghamalian	Teacher	Gedik Pasha
30	Yedvart Kalenian		Kharpert
31	Haigaz Hekimian		Kharpert
32	Nazaret Najarian		Adiyaman
33	Setrag Tatarian		Bolis
34	Nishan Hagopian		Kadikeuy
35	Krikor Antranigian		Yeni Kapu
36	Stepan Dayan (Kordonjian, Simon)		Bardizag
37	Joseph Jermagian		Bolis
38	Onnig Moskofian		Izmit
39	Sarkis Papazian		Beshig Tash
40	Khachadour Meymarian		Afion Karahisar
41	Kevork Kabshilmalian		Stanos
42	Harutiun Momjian		Aintab
43	Harutiun Deirmenjian		Silifke
44	Stepan Chavoush		Bilejik
45	Hagop Arsenian	Pharmacist	Ovajik

List of Armenian Prisoners of War

Egypt, 1918-1919

Կենտրոնական Հրեշտակի Հայ զինվորականներ			
1.	Պրիմա պարտադրված հայերից	անունը	Արմա
2.	Հաճի Զոհան	ինչու	Երզնկա
3.	Լեւոն Արթուր	"	Երզնկա
4.	Գրիգոր Արթուր	"	Հրեշտակ
5.	"	Կիսկի	"
6.	"	Երզնկա	"
7.	Յուսեփ Արթուր	"	Հրեշտակ
8.	"	Բաղդատ	"
9.	"	Արթուր	"
10.	Խաչիկ Արթուր	"	Երզնկա
11.	Բեհլուր Բաղդատ	"	Հրեշտակ
12.	Լուսին Արթուր	"	Հրեշտակ
13.	Զոհան Զոհան	"	Հրեշտակ
14.	Երզնկա Արթուր	"	Երզնկա
15.	Արթուր Երզնկա	"	Հրեշտակ
16.	Խաչիկ Երզնկա	Հրեշտակ	Հրեշտակ
17.	Գրիգոր Զոհան	"	Հրեշտակ

- 18 = Աղյուս Կայսերական Կոչման
- 19 = Գլխավոր Կայսերական Կոչման
- 20 = Զանգուր Կայսերական Կոչման
- 21 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 22 = Զանգուր Կայսերական Կոչման
- 23 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 24 = " Զանգուր Կայսերական Կոչման
- 25 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 26 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 27 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 28 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 29 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 30 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 31 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 32 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 33 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 34 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 35 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 36 = Կայսերական Կայսերական (Կայսերական) Կոչման
- 37 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 38 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 39 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 40 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 41 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 42 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման
- 43 = " " Կայսերական Կոչման
- 44 = Կայսերական Կայսերական Կոչման



Part Two

Diasporal Memoirs: Life in Palestine 1919 - 1940

By
Hagop Arsenian



Chapter Fifteen

*Bethlehem*¹

1919 – 1921

On the same day I returned to Jerusalem, I started looking for a job since my modest budget did not allow me to live leisurely anymore. I, therefore, simultaneously applied to the American Red Cross, the French Hospital and the Public Health Department in Jerusalem, and submitted my resumé and credentials at all these locations. At the latter place, by chance, I met the Health Inspector of Bethlehem, Dr. Khatcher Keshishian. After being formally introduced, he informed me that his department needed a certified pharmacist, so when I expressed my interest in the vacancy, he kindly conveyed this to the chief physician. Finally, for a salary of eight gold coins a month, I was hired as “Government Dispenser.”

On January 27, 1919, after signing a six-month contract, my whole family moved to Bethlehem, where I assumed my new position. Nevertheless, I must say, I had certain complaints and dissatisfactions, since life was extremely expensive and my salary insufficient. I continued to work until I could make alternate plans and the clouds over Armenian skies would dissipate as the regional situation improved. I was in a dilemma because I was forced into this indecisive situation to continue working, while my attention was focused on the Peace Treaty² negotiations which convened in Paris and from

¹ Birthplace of Jesus Christ where the Church of the Nativity is located. (Pl. X)

² The Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920, was the peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Allies at the end of World War I. According to President Wilson’s proposal, Armenia would have regained its territories in Turkey. cf. Micheal Bobelian, *Children of Armenia. A Forgotten Genocide and Century-Long Struggle for Justice*, (NY: Simon and Shuster, 2009), 48. See Map 1.

which we hoped the light of world peace would emanate.

The six-month term of my contract expired, but I continued my work, waiting to see whether the situation would resolve itself and we could return to Izmit. Owing to the unclear regional situation, I decided to stay in Palestine and for the moment not to venture elsewhere, so we stayed in Bethlehem until the first months of 1921. Although my salary had decreased and we were in a financially tight situation, I had the consolation of living in peace with all the members of my family. What we enjoyed and appreciated most was the sense of security which we, the Armenian survivors of the atrocities of the past six years, yearned for the most. We, the afflicted and suffering Armenians, were now probably foremost in appreciating the precious value of life.

During Christmas of 1921, I, my wife Hroust and two sons, Noubar and Norair, especially enjoyed the humble warmth and blessings of the peaceful city in which Christ was born. And on the eve of February 26, 1921, God blessed us with the birth of our third child, a daughter, who became a co-citizen of Jesus. Since she was smaller than the average infant, Father Moushegh baptized her immediately in the Armenian Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, with little Noubar as Godfather; she was named Arsiné.

Fifteen days later, on March 24, 1921, I was transferred to Gaza to assume my new position and had to leave Bethlehem, where I had worked for fourteen months. My family would follow me one month later.

Chapter Sixteen¹*Gaza*²

1921 – 1940

Although the workload was extremely heavy in Gaza, I had many reasons to be happy, especially that the cost of living was very cheap compared to that in Bethlehem. In general, every government employee was entitled to one month's vacation, but for the past three years I had worked uninterruptedly and had not taken one single day off, as my salary did not allow us any extravagant expenses. However, in spite of our tight budget, I finally managed to take a twenty-five day vacation to visit Egypt alone; this had always been my dream.

First I visited Jerusalem, where I spent the Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Three days later, on April 18, 1922, I had the good fortune to be in the Land of the Pharaohs, and for the next twelve days visited the historical sites. At the same time, I had my diploma certified and recognized by the Egyptian Government, which granted me the right to practice in Egypt as a certified pharmacist if ever the need would arise. I also visited the city of Helwan where people from all over the world used to come to enjoy its mild winter climate.

On May 1, 1922, I went to Tanta to visit my good classmate, Hrant Etmekjian³ and then continued to Alexandria, where for four days I stayed as the guest of my dear friend Sahag

¹ Due to the personal nature of this chapter, some of the repetitive details have been excluded. (AAE)

² A coastal city in the south of Palestine.

³ Friend from Bolis, see p. 36.

Gagarian.⁴ On May 6, I left for Ismailiya and Port Saïd and finally, on May 8, returned to Gaza and back to work. A few days later I sent my family to Jerusalem for a vacation since Noubar was ill and not feeling well.

On the national front, the situation was unfortunate and had not yet undergone any major changes. Since the end of the War and the armistice, there had been some conferences and treaties but nothing materialized in establishing final world peace, especially in terrorized and fragmented Turkish Armenia and for dispersed and uprooted people like us. To date, the few remnants of the Armenian people in Anatolia and Cilicia were still being subjected to daily harassments, massacres and deportations, while the humanitarian nations and the patrons of justice, America and Europe watched, as silent spectators, all the atrocities happening to us but refused to put an end to them.

Caucasian Armenia, now under the yoke of a Bolshevik government⁵ and not quite self-sufficient yet, became subject to famine according to the newspapers; whereas the war on the Turkish front continued, reaping the lives of thousands of people. According to the press, there would soon be a meeting at The Hague. Let us see what solutions this meeting will bring. Let us hope and wait!⁶

During 1922-1923, I continued to work in Gaza as a government pharmacist, content with my situation and blessed with my family. I had lost all hope of leaving Palestine and moving elsewhere, or of returning home. During this

⁴ The Gagarians visited the Arsenians in Jerusalem in 1956. (Pl. XVI).

⁵ The October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which toppled the Tsarist regime, led to the Russian abandonment of Eastern Armenia, which was left again at the mercy of the Turkish Forces. cf. G. S. Graber, *Caravans to Oblivion. The Armenian Genocide, 1915*. (USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996), 143.

⁶ Inscribed on May 30, 1922 in Gaza.

time, the Turks were scoring new victories and defeating the Greek army, as a result of which the Armenians who had survived thus far or those who had gone back to areas like Smyrna (Izmir) were yet again uprooted, deported and massacred.⁷

It was also during this year that the whole Armenian population of Cilicia was displaced and became refugees.⁸ The French Government, under whose protection Cilicia had been placed for the past three years, decided to give Cilicia to the Turks due to its national and diplomatic interests and assessment.⁹ Owing to this latest situation, I took the firm decision to stay on and continue my job, since the Turks, after all that had happened, had still emerged victorious due to their power and to the impossible resolutions of the Lausanne Treaty.¹⁰ The Turks succeeded in making their voice heard, and the Allies, the victorious countries of the War, due to political interests, gave in to Turkish demands and acted more like the defeated party than the victorious.

All the Turkish demands were met, and the powers

⁷ Marjorie Dobkin Housepian, *Smyrna 1922, The Destruction of a City*. (Kent State University Press, 1988); Edouard Avrikian, *Mon exode de Smyrne en 1922*, (Montreal: 2007); Abraham H. Hartunian, *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep*, 186-199.

⁸ A newspaper cutting in *Arev*, an Armenian newspaper published in Cairo and dated December 26, 1922, mentions the donation made by children Noubar and Norair Arsenian to the orphans of the Cilician deportations. (p. 177).

⁹ For the French betrayal of Cilicia, some claim that this was the result of the meetings that were held between George Picot and Mustafa Kemal in Ankara, and which decided on economic exchange and strategic advantages versus French withdrawal; Graber, *Ibid.*, 169; Hartunian, in his memoirs *Ibid.*, 177, describes how this agreement was first met with optimism only to reveal later that "*All of Cilicia was to be left to the Turks*;" Kerr, *Ibid.*, 57-174; Mariam V. (Garougian) Sahakian (ed.) *Destiny of the Dzidzernag, Autobiography of Varteres Mikael Garougian*. (Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, Taderon Press, 2005).

¹⁰ The Lausanne Treaty (1923) "*where the world's Great Powers removed the Genocide and the fate of the Armenians from the Agenda*," destroyed the promises and dreams of the Treaty of Sèvres (1920). Cf. Bobelian, *Ibid.*, 67.

revoked all previous sanctions and decisions which they had agreed upon two years before at the Treaty of Sèvres.¹¹ As a result, a few of the Armenian provinces were annexed and our dream for a small independent Armenia was aborted and lost forever.¹² The enormous misjudgments of the great nations were repeated all over again.

I visited Egypt once more, hoping to find a better position and eventually move my family there. But when that wish did not materialize, I took another trip to Egypt, but this time my wife accompanied me. Hence, on October 8, 1923, we traveled to Egypt and spent the first day in Port Saïd, then Ismailiye and finally in Cairo, where we stayed for eight days and visited all the historical and wonderful sites. We then continued to Helwan and Tanta, and finally to Alexandria where we had the opportunity to visit Sahag Gagarian and his wife, among others. (Pl. XI)

On the 24th of October, we returned to Gaza, and on that day I assumed a new position working as a certified pharmacist at the English C.M.S. hospital, *i.e.* Church Missionary Society Hospital.¹³ I had taken this impulsive decision upon the closure of the government hospital, suspecting that soon the pharmacy would also follow. I was afraid that suddenly I would find myself unemployed. Hence, when the C.M.S. suggested that I work for them, I did not refuse and accepted

¹¹ The Treaty of Sèvres of 1920 “embodied nearly all of Armenia’s aspirations. Articles 88-93 of the main agreement called for Ottoman recognition of the Armenian Republic and authorized Wilson to draw new borders between the nations that would likely transfer a handful of Ottoman provinces to the Armenian Republic.” Bobelian, *Ibid.*, 48.

¹² Until September 1991; with the dismantling of the USSR, Soviet Armenia became the independent Republic of Armenia. (AAE)

¹³ Built in 1882 as the first hospital in Gaza by the Anglican Church Missionary Society (*BibleLands*); it is known today as the Ahli Arab Hospital. cf. Jean Hatton, *The Light Bearers, Carrying Hope to the Middle East Battleground*. (Monarch Books: 2003), 87.

without hesitation, provided that they would request the Director of Health to approve my transfer. During my stay in Egypt, all these formalities were completed and, upon my return, I was able to start immediately. However, I later felt that I had made the wrong choice, first because the salary was much less, and later because it became clear that the Government hospital had no intention at all of closing the pharmacy. I just prayed to God that He would not give me more reasons to regret my decision.

On November 27, 1923, exactly one month after starting my new position, I traveled with my family to Jerusalem, where my sister-in-law, (wife's sister) Verkine,¹⁴ married Hovhannes Kafafian from Urfa. We returned to Gaza on the 30th and I immediately resumed my new work, which I found extremely tiring during the first few months.

Noubar attended a local foreign school where he learned Arabic and English, while Norair, speaking a little Armenian, was sent to the elementary school in the Armenian Convent in Jerusalem, and had to be taken care of by his grandmother. As for Arsiné, she completed the kindergarten program at home under her mother's supervision since there were no such facilities in Gaza.

1923 ended peacefully while we continued enjoying a happy and pleasant family life and we welcomed 1924 with the greatest hopes and anticipation of better days.

On Saturday night, January 26, 1924, we were blessed with the birth of our fourth child, a boy, whom we baptized two months later at our home after inviting the priest of the Ramleh Armenian Church, Father Krikor from Izmit, to officiate. We had also invited many people for the occasion, and the godfather was the local government engineer Mr.

¹⁴ One of the survivors of the Genocide.

Merguer Merguerian, and our child was named Jirair Askanaz.

During 1924, although my limited budget did not allow it, I had to go to Beirut for medical treatment for a month, since my health was continuously deteriorating, constantly being subject to colds and influenza. According to the doctors, I seriously needed to have nose surgery. Thus, at the beginning of October, I took Noubar and Norair to Jerusalem and enrolled them at the Armenian school there (*Azkayin Varjarian*).¹⁵ Afterwards I continued to Beirut via Haifa and Acre, where for three weeks, I received medical treatment and surgery to cure me from my terrible colds. Towards the end of October, I went to Damascus via Zahle and two days later returned to Gaza to resume work.

While in Beirut, through my friend Antranik Effendi Goenjian, I drew life insurance for myself for 200 English pounds at La Nation Insurance Company, so that in the event anything happened to me and I would suddenly die, at least my family would have something to live on.

On the national front, we read in the Armenian newspapers that the current Armenia, which was under a Communist regime, was in the course of substantial development and growth. Although it had a limited area of 28,000 km², extreme work was being undertaken to open canals, to do irrigation works and construction, and to convert wasteland into arable, livable regions. In addition, great architectural accomplishments were reported to be taking place in Yerevan.¹⁶ All the newspapers expressed great praise of and satisfaction from the Armenian leaders. However, due to its small size and

¹⁵ Schools founded and funded by the Armenian Apostolic Church.(AAE)

¹⁶ It was during this time that the architect Alexander Tamanian was working on the design and landscaping of modern Yerevan, capital of Armenia. cf. Taline Ter Minassian, *Erevan: la construction d'une capitale à l'époque soviétique*, (Presses universitaires de Rennes: 2007), 9.

limited space, present Armenia was unfortunately in no position to contain all the Armenians who were currently in Greece, Syria and other places and have them immigrate to satisfy their thirst to be on Armenian soil.

According to the newspapers of the past few days, the Greek Government, which so far had given refuge to survivors of the Armenian massacres, had now requested them to leave. Meanwhile, the League of Nations¹⁷ had sent a delegation to Armenia to study the possibilities and means of assisting the refugees who were uprooted and spread in different countries.¹⁸ It studied the land situation and how much reclamation could be made for this purpose. It was written that the Armenian leaders had received this delegation very well and given it all the necessary assistance to facilitate its mission. Let us see how fruitful that philanthropic mission will be!¹⁹

During 1926, I continued working as pharmacist in the C.M.S. Hospital. When the stifling summer season started, I once more became preoccupied with the children's health and their well-being. This necessitated plans for a vacation. I finally rented a room in a place called Katamon²⁰ in Jerusalem and sent the children with their mother there for two months, after which they returned to Gaza. I again

¹⁷ League of Nations, the precursor of the United Nations, was established after WWI. Clive Archer, *International Organizations*. (Routledge: 2001). The delegation to Armenia was led by the Norwegian humanitarian Fridtjof Wedel-Jarlsberg Nansen (1861-1930). He created the "Nansen Passport" for stateless people and was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1922 for assistance to WWI refugees. Christian A.R. Christensen *Fridtjof Nansen: A Life in the Service of Science and Humanity*, (Geneva: UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1961).

¹⁸ These will eventually be referred to as the Diaspora (*Spiurk*). (AAE)

¹⁹ Written in Gaza on May 31, 1925.

²⁰ Ghada Karmi describes in her autobiography, *In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story*, (London: Verso, 2002), growing up in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Katamon.

could not join them. In the fall, when school started, I sent Norair to join his brother at the government school.

During the spring season of 1927, we arranged for the summer vacation since, for the past years, it had become a necessity to get away from the humid climate of Gaza. But as my budget was still limited and I could not afford to send my family to Jerusalem or elsewhere, I decided that it would be more economical to rent, with my brother-in-law, the only beautiful house on the Gaza seaside for six months, and on May 16, we moved there. Every day, the boys and I would ride on donkeys to the city in the morning and then return at night. This was a very pleasant change. As every year, I took my vacation in August to spend time with my children, swimming and relaxing. When the weather became milder, we returned to the city on October 10 after an enjoyable vacation.

Due to the transfer of the local government engineer Mr. Merguer Merguerian to Jaffa to his new post, I rented his house since it was healthier and had a beautiful garden. In November, we moved to the new house and in my free time, as a hobby, I took up gardening, planting and tending the flowers.²¹ Again, the year ended in peace with my happy family without any major difficulty or worry since all of us enjoyed good health.

1927 was a good year for our family except for the earthquake that shook Palestine in July, causing major damage, especially in the regions of Nablus, Lydda and Ramleh.²²

On March 14, 1928, we celebrated the 50th anniversary

²¹ Hagop Arsenian was always fond of gardening and even in his old age, he spent hours every day tending the garden and watering his plants. (AAE)

²² On July 11, 1927 an earthquake hit Palestine causing much destruction. cf. Bailey Willis, "Earthquakes in the Holy Land", (*Bulletin of Seismological Society of America*, Vol. 18, 1928): 73-103.

of the Gaza C.M.S. hospital with great pomp. Two days later, on March 16, upon the arrangement of my director, I was sent to Nablus to work at the C.M.S. hospital there, replacing the pharmacist who had to leave on a month's vacation. It was arranged that Dr. Waheed²³ would replace me in Gaza while the clinical work would be undertaken by Dr. Sterling,²⁴ the head of the hospital.

I was very happy with my stay in Nablus; during my free time I had a chance to visit the local historical sites, the Samaritans²⁵ and their sacred temples, especially the well where, according to the *Bible*²⁶, the Samaritan woman gave water to Jesus. I also visited the site where John the Baptist²⁷ was decapitated in the ruins of Herod's palace in the historical town of Sebastia, an hour from Nablus.

Thanks to the permission granted to me by the female physician of the hospital, Dr. Pigeon, I travelled to Jerusalem on Saturday and attended the Palm Sunday festivities in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,²⁸ returning to Nablus in the evening to continue work for another week.

On the 14th of April, I returned to Gaza with the happy thought of celebrating Easter with my family. But I found my family quite agitated and afraid since anti-Christian demonstrations were taking place in Gaza for the past two

²³ Dr. Munir Afram Waheed.

²⁴ The Hospital was later called Sterling Memorial Hospital. Cf. Eric F. Bishop, "Jerusalem by Ways of Memory", in *The Muslim World, Volume 49, Issue 2, April 1959*, 124-132.

²⁵ A religious group mentioned in the Bible. cf. Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987).

²⁶ John 4:1-26

²⁷ John the Baptist was decapitated by Herod Antipas according to the three Synoptic Gospels. Mathew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9.

²⁸ Church in the Old City of Jerusalem considered to be the traditional site of the Golgotha: crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Pl. VII)

days. This was a result of the International Missionary Meeting, which had taken place a week earlier in Jerusalem. The main theme of the conference was that Christianity should be preached among the Moslems.²⁹ As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood³⁰ had organized a number of anti-Christian demonstrations in a number of cities, including Gaza.

Although on Easter Sunday we did not dare leave home, the following day, the storm had abated and the fear diminished, so I went to the hospital to resume my work normally.

My 1928 summer vacation started in September and with the whole family I traveled to Jerusalem where we rented two rooms in the St. Savior Armenian Convent (*Sourp Prgitch*)³¹ for three weeks during which we relaxed and enjoyed a pleasant stay. However, before my vacation ended, I received a cable from Dr. Sterling to return immediately to Gaza, as he unexpectedly had to go to England. For one month I worked with a Russian physician, Dr. Rodenko, since Dr. Waheed was then transferred to the C.M.S. hospital in Salt³² to replace the physician working there.

During this academic year, I sent Noubar to Jerusalem

²⁹ Actually the 1928 International Missionary Conference in Jerusalem “*made it clear that the missionary enterprise is coming to be not something that we do for other peoples but something we do with them. Gone was the note of condescending superiority. ...to be replaced by 'a great desire to understand other religions sympathetically.'*” Samuel McCrea Cavert, “Beginning in Jerusalem” in *Christian Century*, (May 10, 1928), 1.

³⁰ The Muslim Brotherhood is a Muslim Sunni religious-political organization that was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan el-Banna. cf. Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1993).

³¹ It is in the cemetery adjacent to this church that Hagop Arsenian's remains rest today. (AAE)

³² A city in Jordan 30 kilometers from Amman.

to attend the British Bishop Gobat School³³ on Mt. Zion as a boarding student. I was happy that in his first six months there, he had already proven his intelligence, alertness and diligence and was the first in his class.

As for Norair and Arsiné, I sent them to the local public school, while Jirair completed his kindergarten years at home, under his mother's supervision.

At the beginning of March, 1929, the hospital had a new physician called Dr. Hargreaves,³⁴ who had pastoral and ministerial tendencies which he also required from the hospital employees and staff. At the beginning the atmosphere in the hospital was slightly tense but we gradually adapted to his ways.

During Easter of that year, the eight Armenian nurses of the hospital requested me to write to the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem to send us a priest to Gaza to hold mass and administer Holy Communion to all of us on Easter day.³⁵ Eventually the Sexton Father Mesrop, responding to our appeal, sent the week following Easter Sunday (*Nor Giragi*), a priest from Jerusalem called Father Giuregh Israelian,³⁶ who was a pleasant fellow and spoke English well.

³³ The Bishop Gobat School, named after Protestant Samuel Gobat (1799-1879), was founded as a school for Arab boys in 1853 on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. cf. Frank Foerster, *Mission im Heiligen Land: Der Jerusalems-Verein zu Berlin 1852-1945*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlags-Haus Mohn, 1991); Hatton, *Ibid.*, refers to Bishop Samuel Gobat as "Lord Shaftesbury's great hero", 87.

³⁴ Dr. Alfred R. Hargreaves, the administrator of the CMS Hospital, and his wife served for thirty years as missionaries in Gaza, cf. Nancy Gallagher, *Quakers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The Dilemmas of NGO Humanitarian Activism*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007), 79.

³⁵ For the next twenty years, every Christmas and Easter, a priest and a Deacon would visit Gaza to officiate mass and administer Holy Communion. The list of the names of these clergymen is summarized by Hagop Arsenian. (p. 198).

³⁶ He later became the 94th Patriarch of Jerusalem between 1944-1949 cf. <http://www.armenianpatriarchate.org/page4.html> (October 2010)

On May 12, in the hospital chapel, we held an Armenian Mass. The Armenian nurses assisted, while I and another Jerusalemite, Boghos Ghazarian, undertook the duties of Deacons. It was quite a well-organized mass, after which all twenty-four Armenians present received Holy Communion and had the spiritual fulfillment of having partaken in this Holy Meal. That same day, Father Giuregh also attended the Protestant service and gave an excellent sermon in English which was translated into Arabic by a young man called Yousef Hanna, who later became a prominent journalist and newspaper editor. Both the Arab and British audiences were very pleased with the sermon and were left with a good impression of the Armenians and their clergy.

The news of the visit of our priest to Gaza and his preaching was published a few days later in the Cairo *Arev* Newspaper³⁷ under the heading "Armenian Mass in Gaza." It also added that it had been more than a hundred years since an Armenian monastery, church and congregation had existed in Gaza, as formerly there had been a church called St. Archangels (*Sourp Hreshdagabedats*), as well as a pilgrimage site with special boarding rooms.

In 1929, around the end of August, troubles started all over Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews, disturbing the peace. We were also quite shaken by these events and went through some terrifying moments, especially when we heard that thousands of Bedouins were approaching Gaza to loot and ransack. But through the strict measures undertaken by the Mandate³⁸ government, no major incident took place and only a few local Arabs attacked some of the Jewish families who had taken refuge in a hotel. They also burned a Jewish shop, forcing the authorities to impose a

³⁷ See p. 163 for Arev Newspaper Coverage.

³⁸ The British Mandate administratively governed Palestine from 1922 till 1948.

daily curfew after six in the afternoon. Gradually, the situation returned to almost normal and we went back to work.

The academic year resumed at the beginning of October, 1929. Noubar returned to the Anglican Bishop Gobat School in Jerusalem, Norair continued attending the local school, while I sent Arsiné to the newly established *Sourp Tarkmanchatz* School³⁹ in the Armenian Convent to receive Armenian education and culture.

One of my main concerns and preoccupations was being denied the opportunity to give my children an Armenian education. But what could I do? There was no other means but at least they were given the facility of mastering the Arabic and English languages which would, I hoped, be useful for their future.

On January 6, 1930, I took an unexpected trip to Alexandria, Egypt, after my friend the pharmacist Sahag Gagarian informed me that, to receive a new Egyptian pharmacist's license, I had to present myself in person to the Health authorities and submit my old one for renewal. Therefore, I was granted permission from the hospital director to absent myself for a few days. That evening I stayed at my friend the pharmacist Anoushavan Kutnerian's house in Ismailiye. The next day I continued to Alexandria and stayed with Sahag Gagarian and then went on to Cairo to renew my papers. I received my new license and it gave me great pleasure, for this allowed me to practice in Egypt as well, if the need arose one day.

At present the Egyptian authorities required extremely difficult exams in order to grant the practicing license, but

³⁹ Thanks to the efforts of Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian, the St. Tarkmanchatz School (Holy Translators) was officially opened in 1929 and in 2009 celebrated its 80th anniversary of continuous service to the Armenian Community of Jerusalem. (AAE). cf. <http://www.armenian-patriarchate.org/page2.html> (October 2010).

because mine was originally issued seven years earlier, it was very easy to obtain a new one. I stayed a few more days at Dr. Aram Demirjian's and then returned to Gaza on January 16 to resume work at the hospital.

On January 19, 1930, according to the old Julian Calendar, the Armenians of Jerusalem celebrated Christmas. And eight days later, Father Giuregh [Israelian] and a Deacon came from Jerusalem and celebrated mass again at the hospital chapel. He blessed the water and administered communion to the small Armenian community of Gaza, giving us all spiritual contentment.

In February 1930, an unexpected happy event took us all to Jerusalem. My brother-in-law Simon⁴⁰ got married on Sunday the 23rd, with Noubar as best man and father Meguerditch and three other priests officiating at the St. Archangels (*Sourp Hreshdagabed*) Church in the St. James' Convent. Later the celebrations continued in the small humble room of the Convent. The next day, on Monday, we returned to Gaza together with the bride and groom, for we had offered them to spend their two-week honeymoon in Gaza.

On Saturday April 27, 1930, after Easter, Father Giuregh, accompanied by a Deacon, visited Gaza again for a few days to celebrate mass. But while we were in church, we received a telephone call informing us of the sad news of the passing away of Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian,⁴¹ and requesting from the priest to return immediately to Jerusalem. Since I did not think it was appropriate to interrupt the mass, I informed the priest of the sad news after mass was over, and he immediately left for Jerusalem to arrange for the funeral

⁴⁰ One of the eight who were saved at Meskene. He married Hripsime Zakian. (AAE)

⁴¹ Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian, 91st Patriarch of Jerusalem between 1921-1929.

which was to take place the next day. Surely the Armenian people had lost one of its great sons, a great man, a humble patriarch, an eloquent preacher, an able, educated and philosophical clergyman.

It was a sad coincidence that exactly a month later, the Catholicos of all Armenians in Etchmiadzin,⁴² Catholicos Kevork V,⁴³ also passed away. A few months later, the Armenian people had the misfortune of losing another one of its great men: Boghos Noubar Pasha.⁴⁴ And thus in one year our nation had lost three of its great personalities.

It became important once more to plan this year's vacation since our current house was small and not very good for our health. To make both ends meet, I had rented previously a small house so that I could afford to send Norair to boarding school. Therefore, in order not to indulge in expensive vacations, we decided to go to Deir-el-Balah,⁴⁵ where my sister-in-law and brother-in-law lived, and spent a month living a simple, typical, rural life and swimming occasionally. We returned to Gaza at the end of the month and I continued work routinely.

On October 7, 1930, Noubar, Norair and Arsiné took the road back to Jerusalem, the boys as boarders at Bishop Gobat School, and Arsiné as day student at *Tarkmanchatz* Armenian School in the Convent, enjoying her grandmother's care and love. Jirair was in the Arab Orthodox school in Gaza and my only concern was to provide my children with a

⁴² The Holy Seat of the Armenian Church since 301 AD in Armenia.

⁴³ Anahide Ter Minassian, "Les Combats de Kévork l'affligé le Catholicos Kévork V Souréniantz Vechdali (1911-1930)" in *Haigazian Armenological Review*, Vol. 29, (Beirut 2009), 9-46.

⁴⁴ Armenian philanthropist who founded the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

⁴⁵ A coastal city 13 kms. south-west of Gaza.

good solid education as much as my financial means allowed.

July 15, 1931 was one of the happiest days of my life when Noubar received his High School diploma and a number of prizes for being first in his class. Similarly, my son Norair, was also first in class and received a number of prizes. I was swollen with fatherly pride and joy on that day.

After the academic year ended at *Tarkmanchatz* school, I attended the ceremony during which my daughter Arsiné also received many prizes and was the first in her class. After all the suffering we had been through, it was a just and fair month of July to be rewarded with such hardworking and diligent children. My vacation over, I returned to Gaza to resume work, whereas the children remained for an additional month in Jerusalem since the summer heat was unbearable in Gaza during August.

The fact that Noubar had graduated from secondary school caused me great joy and pride; however, at the same time it was a cause for more worries and concerns, since to send him to university with my limited budget would not have been possible. I finally decided to borrow money and send him to the American University of Beirut⁴⁶ to study pharmacy. Making the necessary arrangements, we sent Noubar to Beirut on September 30, 1931.

On November 26, 1931, Torkom Koushagian, prelate of Egypt and native of Bardizag, was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem.⁴⁷ For one and a half years after the death of the former Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian, the patriarchal seat had remained vacant. Having been informed that the new

⁴⁶ Former Syrian Protestant College founded by Daniel Bliss in 1866 in Beirut. Carleton S. Coon, Jr. (ed.), *Daniel Bliss and the Founding of the American University of Beirut*, (Washington D.C., The Middle East Institute, 1989).

⁴⁷ Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1929 to 1939. <http://www.armenian-patriarchate.org/page4.html> (October 2010).

Patriarch had started his trip to Jerusalem, I ordered a beautiful basket of flowers and early in the morning went to the railway station to greet him and congratulate him on behalf of the Armenian community of Gaza. However, owing to the cold weather, I did not wish to wake him up and disturb him, so I gave the flowers to the priests accompanying him, Giuregh Israelian, Mampre Sirounian and Norair Bogharian, and requested that they transmit to his Beatitude the heartiest congratulations and best wishes of the small Armenian community of Gaza. A few days later, the *Arev* newspaper of Cairo published this little gesture of respect together with all the official functions of the day.⁴⁸

During the month of January, I had unexpected financial difficulties and was obliged to borrow money to pay Noubar's and Norair's tuitions for the second term. This was due to the sudden devaluation of the English Sterling, which caused me to lose around fifteen to sixteen Palestinian Pounds in the exchange, since the American University of Beirut collected tuition only in dollars.

There was a general economic and financial crisis all over the world, and every day the number of the unemployed increased, even in the USA and England, who unlike others, always enjoyed a very envied economic status.

This year the western Easter fell on March 27, and ours, according to the old calendar, exactly five weeks later, that is on May 1. It was quite an interesting phenomenon that while the whole world celebrated Easter according to the new western calendar, only the Armenians and Greeks of Palestine still kept the old Julian calendar and did not wish to change.

On May 8, 1932, on "the New Sunday", we received a

⁴⁸ *Arev* Newspaper, Cairo, Saturday, November 26, 1931, 1.

delegation from the Armenian Convent, sent by the Sexton Father Mesrop, Father Tavit Chalekian and Deacon Yeghiazar Derderian to celebrate mass in the hospital chapel.

This year the hospital decided to close during the month of August, so that all the employees would take their vacation to relax at the same time. While I was thinking of taking my family to a place which would not upset my meager budget, all of a sudden a happy and unexpected situation emerged. One of the pharmacists in Nablus, Hajj Nouredin Arafat, turned out to be in need of a certified pharmacist for a period of one month during which he had to absent himself and travel to Istanbul. His son Tajeddine came to Gaza and signed a one month-contract with me and on the last day of July, the whole family left for Nablus.

On August 31, 1932, we returned to Gaza and on September 1, I resumed work. Noubar and Norair came to the Hospital pharmacy every day to help me as much as possible. To pay Noubar's university tuition, I was forced to borrow from Dr. Waheed 20 Palestinian Pounds and on September 25, we sent him to Beirut to enroll as a first year pharmacy student at AUB.

The same day, my wife and sister-in-law traveled to Jerusalem to see my brother-in law Simon and his family off to Bulgaria. They accompanied their brother to the port of Haifa where he traveled with his wife's family. I had suggested that he let his father-in law travel first and get adjusted to the new environment, and only then follow with his family. Anyway, my advice remained unheeded and they all left. I prayed to God that He would not give them reason to regret this step in the future and that all their hopes would be fulfilled.

This year, Jirair started at the local public school and continued his Armenian lessons with his mother at home.

The international economic situation had worsened and there was a recession in all the countries of the region. Even America, the richest and most prosperous country in the world, saw the number of unemployed rise to 11,000,000, according to the papers, and claimed that the world had not yet recovered from the Great War and its aftermath.

On the national scene, it was a joyful occasion to read around four to five caravans of 10,000 Armenians emigrate to Armenia from all the refugee-settled areas.⁴⁹

On November 12, Archbishop Khoren Mouradbekian was elected the new Catholicos in Etchmiadzin, to occupy the seat vacated by Catholicos Kevork V, who had died two and a half years earlier.

1933 was welcomed in an aura of peace and joy, surrounded by our children except for Noubar, who was in Beirut. On January 19, 1933, on the occasion of our Christmas celebration, we received visits from all our friends, and on the 21st, Saturday, Father Karekin Bulbulian and Deacon Hrant Minassian came from Jerusalem to celebrate mass, as the previous year, in the hospital chapel, giving the spiritual nourishment of Holy Communion to the 23 participating Armenians.

I, as before, continued to work in the hospital, but during the month of April, some disturbing and distressing events took place. My friend and colleague, Dr. Waheed, with whom I had worked so well and harmoniously for the past ten years, was transferred to the C.M.S. Hospital in Jaffa as he had desired. Two weeks later he was replaced by a Greek doctor from Jerusalem, Dimitri Ignatiadis, who was very

⁴⁹ H.W. Meliksetian, *Arevmdahayeri Prnakakhte yev Spiurkahayeri Hayrenatarsoutiune Sovedagan Hayastan, (1915-1940)*, (The Forced Emigration of Western Armenians and the Repatriation of Diaspora Armenians in the Soviet Union (1915-1940)), (Yerevan: Yerevan State University, 1935).

kind and cooperative and like his predecessor, did not give me any trouble working with him.

At the end of June, Noubar came from Beirut for a three-and-a-half month vacation. After resting for a few days, he left for Jerusalem to train at the pharmacy of Mavromikhali in fulfillment of the three-month summer practice required by the AUB.

For this year, I had planned to take my vacation in such a way that I could get some rest and not burden my limited budget. Finally, I agreed with my doctor to take fifteen days off in August and work 15 days in the pharmacy as overtime. When the time came to pay my sons' tuitions in October, I had accumulated enough money and managed with less difficulty than the previous year.

On August 8, 1933, my vacation started, and, together with Norair, I left the next day for Jaffa,⁵⁰ where we visited all our friends and stayed overnight at Dr. Waheed's house. The following day we continued to Nazareth and visited our friend Michel Effendi, who worked as an employee at the post office. Then, accompanied by Mr. Dikran Topalian, we visited Tiberias, Samakh and the spa waters of al-Himmah and on the return trip, had a pleasant stay with the Topalians in Nazareth.

On the 12th, we left for Haifa and gathered with friends at the house of Aharon Melkonian for quite an enjoyable time. The following day, Sunday, we attended mass at the Armenian church, and with all our fellow Armenians, accompanied by Deacon Vartkes Basmadjian, we visited the Baha'i⁵¹ shrine

⁵⁰ Coastal Palestinian city north of Gaza and south of Haifa. (Map 4)

⁵¹ Intellectual centre of the Baha'i faith which following persecutions in 19th c. Persia moved to Palestine. Cf. Kenneth E. Bowers, *God Speaks Again: An Introduction to the Baha'i Faith*, (Baha'i Publishing, 2004).

and the garden of Abbas Effendi, and spent a very pleasant time until evening.

The following day, we continued to Acre, so that Norair would get a chance of doing some sight-seeing as well and, accompanied by our friend Chahine Effendi, visited the Baha'i centre too, as well as the match factory, the Public Garden, and the old historical prison. After having lunch at the house of Chahine Effendi, we returned to Haifa.

Towards the end of August, we enjoyed the visit of our honorable friend, Mr. Krikor Mekhalian, from Jerusalem and his daughter Alice, who was eager to work as a nurse at the British Hospital. Thus we had the great pleasure of entertaining them in our humble home for a few days.

On October 3, 1933, Noubar left for Beirut to enroll in his second year in pharmacy at AUB, and for the first installment of his tuition, which was 36 Palestinian Pounds, I again had to borrow a small amount. Norair and Arsiné also left on the same day. Upon their arrival in Jaffa, they got in touch with me, informing me that their uncle Simon and family had returned from Bulgaria, where they had gone a year before. Due to the bad economic situation, after spending a whole year without work, he had returned to Jerusalem.

This year, the local government of Gaza put up for sale the land between the city and the coast with the intention of constructing a new area. Although I was neither in a financial position nor currently in the mood to construct, with the best hopes for the future, I bought 1775 square meters, paying the amount of 525 Palestinian piasters.

During the course of the year, the peace in Palestine and its economic situation were disrupted by events and demonstrations in October in most major cities of the country. As a result, numerous victims fell and many casualties were

inflicted among the Arabs, who constituted the majority of the population. Many revolted against the governing British, and protest demonstrations were organized, leading to numerous deaths and casualties.

In December, during the last month of 1933, a sad and tragic event took place on the Armenian national scene. Archbishop Ghevont Tourian, the Primate of America, was stabbed on December 24, on Christmas Eve, inside the New York Armenian Church.⁵² According to the press, the American Government arrested seven Tashnag (ARF)⁵³ members for having committed this crime. Let us wait and see what is going to happen with the government investigation. Whoever is guilty of this crime will deserve a just and fair punishment.

On Saturday, January 20, 1934, Father Haigazoun Aprahamian visited Gaza from Jerusalem accompanied by Deacon Sarkis Avedikian. On the following day, they celebrated mass in the hospital chapel. It was attended by the small Armenian community of Gaza consisting of 24 people. They administered Holy Communion to all of us

⁵² For the details of this incident see Michael Bobelian, *Ibid.*, 112-114, who attributes the later Armenian party divisions to this incident. Also Walker, *The Survival of a Nation*, 354; Mariam V. Sahakian (Garougian), *Ibid.*, 281; The *New York Times* of July 14, 1934 mentions *Nine Found Guilty in Church Murder; Two Convicted of Murder and Seven of Manslaughter in Armenian Prelate's Death*; Also see Terry Phillips' historical novel about the incident entitled *Murder at the Altar*, (Hye Books, 2008).

⁵³ The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) is an Armenian socialist political party founded in Tiflis (Tbilisi in modern day Georgia) in 1890. cf. Hratch Dasnabedian, *History of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation: Dashnaksutiun, 1890-1924* (Oemme Edizioni, 1990). In its 41st convention, the ARF considered the assassination of Primate Tourian to be the work of a Turkish and Bolshevik conspiracy against the Dashnaksutiun. See in "Declaration of the 41st Convention of the American Region of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation to the Armenian People" (in Armenian), *Asbarez* XXV.1,630 (August 17, 1934).

and spiritually nourished and fulfilled us. On Monday, the priest and the Deacon returned to Jerusalem.

On July 12, I left for Jerusalem to attend the happy occasion of Norair's graduation from the Bishop Gobat School on Mt. Zion. I was truly proud when Norair, as valedictorian, addressed his classmates in such excellent Arabic that the audience applauded him with great appreciation and praise. The following day we returned to Gaza.

Another occasion to increase and enhance my paternal pride and satisfaction soon arose with Arsiné's elementary graduation from *Tarkmanchatz* School in Jerusalem. This event was held under the aegis of Patriarch Torkom, who in person handed Arsiné's diploma and her prizes, after which she also gave a speech in Armenian.

This year I also took only fifteen days of annual leave and spent the remaining fifteen days working in the pharmacy since my tight budget did not accommodate further expenses for my leisure.

During my two-week vacation, I handed over the hospital pharmacy to Noubar, as he was obliged to remain in Gaza for his three-month summer training in a recently opened pharmacy there.

On August 17, 1934, I left with Norair for Haifa. He was invited for an interview based on his application to work at Barclays Bank. When he was employed, we stayed a few more days during which we rented a room for him, and afterwards I returned to Gaza.

After Arsiné graduated from the Armenian School, it was important to find a Boarding School for her to continue her education. Thanks to the Lord's blessings and plans, on September 24, I sent Arsiné as a boarder to the Jerusalem

Girls' British College.⁵⁴ At the same time, Noubar returned to Beirut to AUB. Only our youngest child Jirair remained at home with us while he continued his studies at the local government school and on Fridays and vacations, he would come to help me in the pharmacy.

During the year, we enjoyed the visit of prominent guests in our home. First we had the pleasant visit of Krikor Effendi Mekhalian, our former principal and teacher in Ovajik,⁵⁵ and had the occasion to reciprocate and thank him for his many years of service to us. We were also visited by former Deacon and fellow citizen Vartkes Basmadjian, from Haifa; Father Moushegh from Jerusalem; Father Haygazoun, Hovsep Krikorian, Dr. Kh. Keshishian, in addition to Dr. Waheed and my in-laws.

We welcomed 1935 with the highest hopes and expectations. For the Armenian Christmas (January 19, 1935), Father Housig Avedikian (formerly Deacon), accompanied by Deacon Harutian Hadidian, came from Jerusalem to officiate mass and on January 20, in the Chapel of the hospital, mass was celebrated. The service was assisted by Mr. Krikor Portoyan, an employee from the oil company, who had come from Kirkuk (Iraq) and happened to be in Gaza for a few months. The priest stayed with us as guest for a few days to enjoy, after years of separation, the presence of his sister who had just arrived from England to work at our hospital as staff nurse.

On March 22, I sent my wife Hroust and my son Jirair to Haifa to visit Norair and I followed them on Sunday.

⁵⁴ Initially called the British High School and founded by the Jerusalem and East Mission, it was renamed the Jerusalem Girls' College in 1923. Cf. Ela Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow: Education and Islam in Mandate Palestine*, (University of Texas Press, 2010), 76.

⁵⁵ See p. 28.

I immediately went to Church where Patriarch Torkom, Father Mesrop and two other priests were officiating and we were spiritually fulfilled by the Patriarch's sermon and the Holy Mass.

The same evening, we had the privilege of attending, under the patronage of the Patriarch, the 1500th anniversary jubilee celebration of the translation of the *Bible* into Armenian. The following day, Monday, I visited Acre and returned in the evening to Gaza with Jirair.

On Saturday, June 22, 1935, my wife and I left for Haifa on our way to Beirut to attend Noubar's graduation from the American University of Beirut. We left Jirair with our landlord so that he would not miss any classes. After spending one night in Haifa, with Norair, we left the following morning for Beirut.

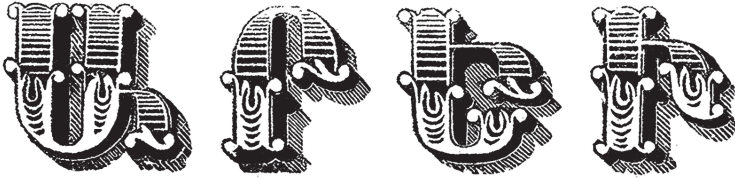
On Monday, we visited a few friends in Beirut and at the Catholicosate in Antelias.

Tuesday, June 25, 1935 was an unforgettable and joyful day for us. My wife and I basked in the parental pride, witnessing the fruits of long years of sacrifice, suffering and toil: Noubar graduating and receiving his Pharmacy diploma from the American University of Beirut.⁵⁶ (Pl. XIII). That same evening, we were invited by our friends the Cheterians from Adabazar.

The following day, Wednesday, we visited the campus of the American University of Beirut, as well as the various buildings and departments, and all our friends residing in Beirut. On Thursday, we rented a car and Hrou, Noubar and I went to Zahle and stayed one night at the house of Mrs. Aghavni Sahagian. The following day we continued to

⁵⁶ On this happy occasion, Mr. Krikor Portoyan, from Ramleh, donated 10 Palestinian piasters to the Cairo Newspaper *Arev*. (p. 177).

Excerpts from Arev Newspaper, Cairo
(Sewn on Manuscript)



Նոսրի կը հրատարակենք Գա-
զան (Պաղեստին) ստացուած եր-
կու մանկիկներու յուզիչ մէկ նա-
մակը, առանց սեւէ փոփոխութեան:

Գազա, 26 դեկտեմբեր.

Խմբագրութիւն «ԱՐԵՎ»ի 1922

Շաբաթ օրուան «Արեւ»ին մէջ
փոփոխիկ տարագիրներու մասին գրուա-
ծը կարդալով մեր մանկական արեւը
մեծապէս յուզուեցանք:

Վասնզի վեց տարի առաջ, ա-
ռաջին տարագրութեան առեւ, մենք ալ
միեւնոյթ դժբաղդութիւնն ունեցած էինք
այդ տարուան կաղանդի օրը «Մեքե-
նէ»ի անտպասին մէջ անցընելու ամեն
բանէ զրկուած:

Այդ բերրի կարդալէ վերջը մենք
երկու եղբայրներս ալ առաջարկեցինք
մեր հայրիկին այս կալանդին ու եւ
է նուէր չընդունիլ բանի որ մեր փոփ-
փոխիկ տարագիր փոխեցք եւ եղբայրները
պատասաւ մը հացի խակ կարօտ պիտի ըլ-
լան այդ օրը: Ուստի կը զրկեմք ձեզի
մէկ եզիպտական օսկի (100 դրամական),
եւ կը խնդրենք որ մեր այս փոփոխիկ
նուէրը այդ նպատակաւ կազմուած
Տիկնանց Յանձնաժողովին բարեհաճիք
յանձնել:

Ընդունեցէք մեր շնորհակալու-
թիւնները եւ յարգանքները:

Նուպար եւ Նորայր Արսէնեան

«ԱՐԵՎ»Ի ՖՈՆՏԻՆ

Ռամկէյէն Պր. Գրիգոր Փոռ-
թոյան 10 տաղ. դն. կը նը-
ւիրէ «Արեւ»ի ֆոնտին Պ. Նու-
պար Յ. Արսէնեանի (ի Ղազա)
Պէյրութի Ամերիկեան Համալըսա-
րանի դեղագործական ճիւղէն օրը-
ջանաւարտ ելլելուն առթիւ, վա-
սըն խնդակցութեան:

25-6-35

June 25, 1935.

Donation by Mr. Krikor Portoyan on the
occasion of Nourar's Graduation from
AUB

December 26, 1922.

Noubar and Norair Arsenian donate to the
orphans of the 1922 Cilician Deportations

the Anti-Lebanon mountains and returned to Beirut after visiting the beautiful summer resorts.

On Saturday, we visited some friends in Sidon and on Sunday, after attending mass in Beirut, we returned to Gaza, via Haifa.

A few days before his graduation, Noubar was already appointed assistant pharmacist by the Jerusalem Health Department. So after returning from Beirut, he rested for a few days and left again for Jerusalem to take up his new post.

Having already spent ten days of my annual vacation by going to Beirut, I still had twenty days left. Thus, on August 10, the entire family left for Jerusalem for a week's vacation. On Sunday, August 11, we attended the baptism of the son of my brother-in-law Simon (wife's brother). The child was named Krikor. On this occasion, Norair also came and we spent a happy day together.

During the academic year, Arsiné expressed the wish to be a day student and not a boarder at the Jerusalem Girls' College, so we registered her as a day student and were obliged to leave her in the good hands of her grandmother in the Armenian Convent.

Colonel Heron,⁵⁷ the Director of the Health Department, suggested that Noubar go back to Beirut and specialize further in radiology at AUB at the expense of the Palestine Government, and then come back and serve in the Health Department as an X-ray specialist. Accordingly, he left for Beirut and returned a year later with a degree in radiology and immediately started working in the Palestine Government Health Directorate.

⁵⁷ Colonel G.W. Heron served for twenty years in Palestine. See "Twenty Years of British Medical Service in Palestine" in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, volume 116, issue 7, Saturday, (15 February 1941), 643.

Norair continued working as before at Barclays Bank in Haifa. At the same time, he followed a banking course by correspondence. As for Jirair, he continued attending the local government school, being the only family member remaining with his parents.

After happily spending Christmas (December 25) celebrations, we completed the year 1935 and stepped into 1936 in the hope of good and promising days.

My wife's and my ardent desire to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary on October 10, 1935 did not materialize due to the difficulty of gathering all our children at this particular time of year. Instead, we celebrated on Sunday, January 5, 1936, when we were able to realize this dream, although Noubar again could not attend, being away in Beirut.

That day turned out to be a memorable one for us. Seventy five of our friends including Greeks, Arabs and Britons attended a glorious tea party at our residence. Many of those present spoke congratulatory words and Norair translated into English my Armenian speech, as well as the blessings sent by Patriarch Torkom on this occasion. After relaying their good wishes, all the guests left happy and content.

During the first month of 1936, the world witnessed a great loss with the death of England's King George V.⁵⁸ On January 20, Monday evening, his eldest son and heir to the throne, Edward VIII, Prince of Wales, was declared King of England and Emperor of India.

On the occasion of the Armenian Christmas this year, Father Dirair Dervishian and Deacon Armenag Voskeritchian visited us from Jerusalem and celebrated mass in the hospital chapel with our small community consisting of

⁵⁸ King George V died on January 20, 1936. Kenneth Rose, *King George V*, (London: Nicholson and Nicolson, 1983).

24 Armenians. We also had Holy Communion and were spiritually nourished.

On Sunday morning, February 9, 1936, I, my wife and Jirair traveled to Ramleh where our dear friend Krikor Effendi Mekhalian had been convalescing for the past few weeks, recovering from a critical health situation. In the morning we attended service at the Armenian Church of Ramleh led by Father Nerses Torossian.

On Monday, April 20, 1936, the situation in Palestine started to deteriorate. The day before, two crimes were committed in Jaffa⁵⁹ sparking the beginning of the Arab-Jewish conflict and fighting. As of that day, the Palestinian Arab population began a strike, closing down all shops. Transport by car stopped and aggressive acts were committed against the Jews everywhere. The Arabs revolted against the government and stopped all official dealings, paying taxes, frequently cutting the railway and telephone lines. Armed men took shelter in the Palestinian mountains and on the hill tops and carried out attacks on travelers and armed onslaught on soldiers.

For an entire six months, the whole of Palestine turned into a battlefield; daily attacks, killings and other violent acts were never absent, and on both sides a lot of victims fell. Two Armenians were also killed, one on a Tel Aviv train and the other in a Jaffa car.

To end this stormy and turbulent situation in Palestine, and to reestablish peace, the British government deployed 30,000 soldiers all over the Palestinian cities and villages and all along the railway lines to ensure their security. But it was still impossible to create a state of normalcy; on the

⁵⁹ Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians 1876-1948*. (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2nd.ed. 1991).

contrary, the situation worsened. The common Arab people's only request and wish was that the government of Palestine promise and take measures to stop Jewish immigration into Palestine and that the Balfour Declaration promising Palestine as a national home for the Jews be finally annulled.⁶⁰

As everywhere in Palestine, the situation in Gaza was also turbulent. Almost every night, the sounds of shooting and gunfire could be heard in the city and the neighboring villages. The peaceful population had now become restless and constantly provoked the government to revoke its decision. A curfew was imposed every evening after 7 p.m. and it was strictly forbidden to circulate in the streets.⁶¹

The stormiest and most critical day was Monday, May 25. The whole population proceeded to the center of the city, pulling down telephone lines and poles; afterwards, they attacked the properties of the small Jewish community in the city. Then the soldiers came and dispersed the mobs by shooting left and right and in the process killed a young man. The cry for revenge filled the streets and it became impossible to control the masses. Our hospital, being a British organization, also came under attack. We immediately rushed to put the sick in the hallways and spent terrifying moments. Finally, towards evening, the British brought in their tanks, and with fire extinguishers and cannon balls dispersed the crowds. Quiet was restored during the day time, but every evening we could hear gunfire disrupt the stillness of the curfew.

⁶⁰ On November 2, 1917, the British Count Arthur Balfour declared that "*His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people*," cf. Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961).

⁶¹ Most of the clashes took place among the local Arab Palestinian population, the forces of the British Mandate and the two military Jewish organizations known as the Haganah and the Irgun; cf. Dr. Saul Zadka, *Blood in Zion, How the Jewish Guerrillas drove the British out of Palestine*, (London: Brassey's, 1995).

Being close to the city center, it became very difficult for us to attend to our daily needs and find meat or vegetables. Every day, we waited impatiently for the curfew to be lifted and for normalcy to return. Finally, the Arab kings and princes of Hejaz, Yemen, Iraq and Trans-Jordan mediated with the British Government requesting that the British Mandate guarantee that Palestine would remain Arab, and in return, the Arabs would end the six-month strike. The meeting was successfully concluded and accordingly, the strike ended on October 12, 1936.⁶² The fearful days came to an end, and we could finally resume a normal life.

Due to the general situation, I did not want to take my annual vacation and go far from my home and work. Hence, I just chose a few days in August to visit Norair in Haifa and Noubar in Jerusalem. However, to make both trips proved to be quite an ordeal since travel by train had lately become a fearful and dangerous experience. As we were proceeding from Haifa to Jerusalem, we had to stop at the Qalqilya⁶³ station, where we were told that all the passengers had to return to Haifa, because the preceding train had derailed due to a bomb explosion. Thus, we were forced to stay in Qalqilya station for five hours until transportation was secured from Jaffa. The following day, on August 7, I finally could return to Gaza.

On October 13, 1936, a day after the strike ended, I accompanied Arsiné, who was returning to Jerusalem, all the way to Lydda station. Noubar and Norair, returning from a trip to Beirut, met us there. Noubar took Arsiné to the Jerusalem Girls' College, where she would again be a

⁶² Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians and 1948: the underlying causes of failure", in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds.) *The War for Palestine*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2001), 12-36.

⁶³ City in the northwest of Palestine, 12 kilometers from the Mediterranean Coast.

boarder this year since staying with her grandmother was becoming difficult for both of them.

Three days after the end of the strike, a Royal Commission visited Palestine to investigate the Arab-Jewish conflict. It was rumored that it would stay for three months, meeting official and non-official personalities in order to gather information and to ask their opinion about the situation. However, the Arab High Command in Jerusalem called for a boycott and asked the people not to cooperate with this royal delegation. At the same time, the President of the British Jewish Agency announced in their Parliament, without waiting for the results of the Commission's investigations,⁶⁴ that Jewish emigration from England to Palestine would be resumed. Therefore, the Arabs felt that the role of the Commission was already aborted and there was no point in cooperating with it.

At the end of the year 1936, an interesting event took place in England. The young King Edward VIII abdicated in order, as the press mentioned, to marry his divorced American sweetheart, since the British crown would not tolerate a divorced woman as queen. (Although, there were rumors that there were other serious problems between the King and the Parliament). Thus, on September 12, 1936, George VI acceded to the British throne as King of England and Emperor of India.

The international political situation seemed to be going through convulsions as well this year. In Spain, a civil war⁶⁵ was taking place where the population was divided between

⁶⁴ The Peel Commission. cf. *Palestine Royal Commission Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, July 1937*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937).

⁶⁵ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007).

two fronts: on the one hand was the government with its socialist and communist allies, and on the other, the Fascists. The war was a bloody one and both parties suffered heavy casualties every day. It was hoped that this conflict would not lead to another general European war. Germany and Italy were supporting the rebels, while France and Russia were sending fighters to help the government. As for England, it had opted to remain neutral in this conflict. Let us wait and see what is going to happen due to this dangerous situation!

The Armenian nation suffered a great loss in 1936 with the death of Catholicos Papken,⁶⁶ coadjutor of Catholicos Sahag of Cilicia, who had been established in Antelias near Beirut for the past few years.

The year 1937 began with great expectations, and we all hoped for a British solution in favor of Palestine. On January 19, on the occasion of Armenian Christmas, my brother-in-law visited us from Jerusalem, his wife having preceded him by two weeks for the feast of St. James (*Sourp Hagop*). On January 23, Father Housig visited us from Jerusalem to officiate mass.

On February 19, on the occasion of the Muslim feast, taking advantage of Jirair being on holiday, we went to Haifa for a few days to see Norair and to enjoy the hospitality of fellow citizen Melkon Agha Boghossian and family. Together, we visited Nazareth, Shifa Amr and Apia Ceasarea, after which we returned to Gaza refreshed.

During the beginning of April, we heard of the unexpected death of my dear teacher Mr. Krikor Mekhalian in Cairo. A few months earlier, he had traveled to Cairo

⁶⁶ Catholicos Papken Guleserian (1868-1936) was chosen as coadjutor to the aging Catholicos Sahag (1902-1939), yet died before him. cf. *The Life and Work of Coadjutor Catholicos Papken Guleserian*, translated and edited by Vatche Ghazarian, (Waltham: Mayreni Publishing, 2000).

for the publication of his book⁶⁷ and had promised me to come and stay with us in Gaza on his way back. So on the 10th of April, we left for Jerusalem for his memorial service. On this sad occasion, I had the chance to see some of our former compatriots and *Adabazartsi* friends, as well as meet Mr. Yeghishe Hampartsoumian from Baghdad and Father Nerses Kerovelian and his wife, who had come for pilgrimage from Bucharest.

Wednesday, September 29, 1937, became a memorable day for us. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Father Torkom, had informed us two days earlier of his decision to pay a two-day visit to Gaza, accompanied by three priests. Starting Tuesday, preparations began for a royal reception. In the morning, I met with the heads of the different religious denominations in Gaza, official personalities and Christian and Muslim figures, informed them of the Armenian Patriarch's visit to Gaza, and invited them to a small reception the following day, at 10 a.m. at our residence.

On Wednesday, the day of the visit, at 8:30 in the morning, Mr. Leon Yotnakhparian and I drove some 10-15 kilometers in a private car, to meet the Patriarch and accompany him into Gaza city and then to our house. He was accompanied by Fathers Yeghishe, Housig and Bsag, as well as his guards (*kavas*).

At ten o'clock the official reception, gathering the prominent personalities of the town, took place in our house while we served lemonade and cake. Later, at eleven, we visited the historical mosque of Gaza, the Greek Orthodox Church and the British hospital.

At 1 p.m. we returned to our home, where the lunch

⁶⁷ Krikor Mekhalian, *Bardizagn ou Bardizagtsin* (Bardizag and Its People), (Cairo: Sahag-Mesrob Press, 1938).

table was set; in addition to the Patriarch and his retinue, we had as guests the Latin and Greek Orthodox priests, the Anglican pastor of Gaza, two British physicians and other friends from the hospital. Following a very pleasant lunch, we all took a souvenir picture together.

When the guests left, we took the Patriarch and the priests to visit the beautiful beach of Gaza, where he enjoyed a walk along the seaside.

At 4:30, Dr. Hargreaves, the physician of the C.M.S. Hospital and his wife invited us to tea, which the Patriarch highly appreciated and for which he thanked them.

After we returned home around 6 p.m., His Beatitude wished to test Jirair's knowledge of Armenian by asking him to write an essay describing the events of the day. Jirair did this very capably (with some minor mistakes), considering the fact that his knowledge of the Armenian language was acquired solely at home without the instruction of a private tutor. We then spent the evening around an intimate family supper and enjoyed the Patriarch's various news and anecdotes.

The following day, Thursday, September 30, after breakfast and another group picture, His Beatitude blessed us all and left for Jerusalem at 8 a.m. Needless to say, his visit had touched us profoundly and filled us with spiritual fulfillment and satisfaction.⁶⁸

On October 3, Arsiné's school reopened and she left for Jerusalem for her last year at the British Girls' College. As for Jirair, he would hopefully complete the local government school this year and attend, like his brothers, the Bishop Gobat school on Mt. Zion next year.

This month, the situation in Palestine deteriorated again.

⁶⁸ See p. 187 For Arev Newspaper's coverage of this visit.

Everywhere in the country, turbulences, riots, killings and disturbances took place and most of the telephone lines were cut. The government took strict measures in all cities: arresting many people, imprisoning others, and even deporting some. Such measures were not even taken during last year's six-month strike. Let us see how this is going to affect the situation!

The British Royal Commission, which was sent last year to investigate the situation, had reached the decision to resolve the Palestinian conflict by partitioning the country into an Arab and a Jewish state.⁶⁹ The Palestinian Arabs categorically refused this proposal. As a result, the League of Nations decided to send another delegation (which will be reaching Palestine soon), in order to investigate alternative solutions. It is the news of this latest initiative that led to the recent mobilization of the masses in the streets who resorted to violent protests in order to make their voices heard by the International Community. In addition, the Palestinian Mandate government recently abolished the Supreme Islamic Council and divested the Board of *Awkaf*⁷⁰ of its authority. It is said that the Mufti⁷¹ was deported or escaped abroad. We will have to wait and see how these developments will affect us all!

December 25, 1937. On the day of western Christmas and the feast of St. James (*Sourp Hagop*), Noubar, Norair and Arsiné arrived and we all celebrated together, enjoying the warmth of our family's closeness. This year, we were also

⁶⁹ This came to be known as the Peel Partition Plan A to distinguish it from the later 1947 partition plan of Palestine.(AAE)

⁷⁰ Supreme Islamic Council.

⁷¹ Grand Mufti Haj Muhammad Amin el Husseini. cf. *Haj Amin al-Husayni, Memoirs of the Grand Mufti*, (ed.) (Damascus: Abd al-Karim al-Umar, 1999). Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation*, 440-441.

joined by Mr. Berge Darakjian and Nazaret Pareshanian, both teachers of the Armenian school of Jerusalem, here on a visit. A few days later, they returned to their work.

1938 started with our best wishes and concerns. In Palestine, the situation was extremely tempestuous and our hopes for a peaceful settlement were diminishing, especially that troubles were looming everywhere. The Spanish people continued fiercely their internecine war; Japan and China were at war; Italy and Germany continued acting irresponsibly and threatened world peace, not even allowing the League of Nations to prove its position. All the evidence seems to be pointing towards a World War this year. May God the Merciful instill peace and goodwill in the hearts of the leaders of this world.

January 7, 1938. I fell ill with a worrying disease called *erysipelas*⁷² which forced me to remain at home for ten days. However, thanks to the existing new treatments, I recovered without further complications and returned to work. But I continued having throat problems for several weeks which forced me to travel to Haifa to consult a specialist.

On Saturday, March 12, another world development clouded our skies. Newspapers reported that Germany invaded Austria, greatly alarming all the world leaders. However, it was too late to simply protest and some practical measures were needed, since the German leader Hitler put the whole world in front of a *fait accompli*, just as Mussolini, the great leader of Italy, had done the previous year by occupying Abyssinia.⁷³

On March 17, Hrut traveled to Jerusalem to visit her mother who had fallen ill. So for fifteen days, Jirair and I

⁷² Red Skin: infectious skin disease. (AAE)

⁷³ In May 1936, Italy occupied Ethiopia, following one year of fighting.

took care of the cooking and cleaning, and managed, I may say, quite well.

On April 10, Patriarch Torkom of Jerusalem received a telegram from Etchmiadzin informing him of the death of Catholicos Khoren I.⁷⁴ He immediately cabled all the churches announcing this tragic news. In all the Armenian churches, all over the world, special memorial services were officiated for his Holiness, and prayers were raised that a new Catholicos would soon be elected, without any delay, in the current difficult conditions of Bolshevik Armenia.⁷⁵

On April 17, on Easter, according to the Gregorian calendar, all my children gathered in Gaza. One week later, Father Artoun Hadidian and Deacon Ashod Yeretsian also arrived and officiated mass and Holy Communion.

In July, Arsiné finished school and sat for her Palestinian matriculation exam. Although my annual vacation would start on July the 23, due to the tense situation in Palestine, I did not dare to travel this year, especially to major cities like Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem, where bomb explosions were very frequent. Only this week, a major explosion had taken place in Haifa's vegetable market, killing fifty four and wounding hundreds of people, some very seriously.⁷⁶

As for the Arab opposition, it took shelter in the Palestinian mountains and prepared surprise attacks against the British soldiers. Telephone and telegram lines were cut again, and

⁷⁴ Catholicos Khoren Mouradbekian was assassinated by the Soviet secret police in 1938. The Holy See remained vacant till 1944. cf. Vrej Nerses Nersessian, *Armenian Christianity*, in Ken Perry (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, (John Wiley and Sons, 2010), 23-46.

⁷⁵ Soviet Armenia.

⁷⁶ On July 25, 1938, numerous Arabs were killed by a bomb explosion in the Haifa market said to be planted by the Jewish military group Irgun. cf. *Palestine Post*, July 26-27, 1938.

attempts to blow up railway tracks were made. In short, terror and fear reigned everywhere. According to yesterday's Arabic newspapers, the night before last, the opposition forces surrounded the government hospital in Safad⁷⁷ and kidnapped one of their wounded members arrested there. Every day the newspapers are full of such news of killings, riots and disruptions and, security and peace seem to have disappeared in all of Palestine. So far, Gaza seems to be the safest and most secure place, but let us wait and see when Palestine will return to its former normal and peaceful lifestyle!

For my vacation this year, we decided not to travel in Palestine but to go instead to Beirut and enjoy the peace of Lebanon. So for twelve days, we relaxed in the beautiful resorts of Mount Lebanon and visited the city of Damascus too.

On August 22, 1938, we returned from Beirut to Gaza to find that the situation had deteriorated further in the country. The Mandate government had passed a law requiring all people traveling by car or by train to carry identity cards and to obtain travel permits issued by the government. On the other hand, the heads of the Arab revolutionary movements secretly informed their people not to cooperate with the authorities and not to apply for such permits under penalty of death. Hence, torn between these two counter measures, no one dared to travel anymore or take public transport.

Palestine was witnessing terrifying days. In Gaza, electricity, which had been installed only two months earlier, was now completely cut since all the lines and poles were down and we were totally plunged in darkness for weeks. According to the newspapers, so far 3,717 victims had fallen in 1938. Let us see what the future has in store for us!

⁷⁷ City in the north of Palestine in the region of Galilee.

For the new academic year, we decided to send Jirair to Jerusalem as a boarder at the Bishop Gobat School. So on October 3, he left with his mother, who wished to see him settled and returned immediately in a government car since public transport had become extremely dangerous. As for Jirair's tuition, Noubar decided to take care of it this year.

Arsiné, having completed her secondary education, decided to stay with us in Gaza. When our plan to find her a teaching position failed, she registered for a course in sewing and design.

On October 26, we went to the Gaza Railway station to meet the Patriarch, who was on his way to Egypt for a vacation.

Sunday, November 13, was another day of fear and terror for the Gaza population as a 24-hour curfew was declared by the military government because a day earlier, on Saturday, two British soldiers had been assassinated in Gaza's Bab el Darun⁷⁸ district. Hence the whole area was sealed off by the authorities and some thirty people were arrested. At 12 noon, we heard the sounds of bomb explosions forcing the occupants of this area's houses and shops to evacuate.

On Friday, November 18, 1938, another 24-hour curfew was imposed, for at 2 o'clock near the municipal hospital, an unknown passer-by threw a bomb at the car of the chief of the police, wounding his Arab driver. Luckily he was not killed. But the whole city was immediately closed down, and a general curfew imposed again. During this time, we had two sisters Lydia and Ferida Ghosein as house guests, and who came to us seeking shelter as they were afraid to stay alone in their house. The next day at 3 p.m. the curfew

⁷⁸ One of the seven gates of the Old City of Gaza.(AAE)

was lifted and the whole town rushed outdoors to secure its needs and tend to its immediate affairs.

This year, we could neither celebrate the western Christmas nor the Armenian one with the children. Only Jirair managed to come for a few days (since this was his first year away from home). Nor did we have any clergy from Jerusalem to come and officiate mass. Dark clouds were looming all over Palestine, and we were living extremely insecure and terrifying days.

We greeted 1939 with the best of spirits, hoping for peace for Palestine and the world. In London, the British government invited the Palestinian and Arab leaders for a Round Table Conference to resolve the future of Palestine.⁷⁹ All eyes are turned towards London and this meeting. Let us see what fruitful results it will bring!

April 1, 1939. I had to undergo a hernia surgery at the hospital. I was operated by our two physicians Dr. Masterman and Dr. Dimitri, who used local anesthesia and Praise God, it was very successful. I stayed in hospital for 14 days. On Easter day, Noubar, Norair and Jirair came to visit me and keep me company, and it was such a consolation for me to have them around.

On April 4, an unexpected event shook our world. The young monarch of Iraq, King Ghazi, was killed in a car accident. He was succeeded by his four-year old son, Faisal II, while his uncle acted as co-regent.⁸⁰ It was truly a great

⁷⁹ On February 7, 1939, the conference opened at St. James' Palace in London, hosted by Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald. Representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, Yemen, and the Palestinians (led by Jamal al-Husayni, George Antonius, and Musa al-Alami) met with British officials but refused to meet directly with the Jewish delegation. cf. Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy, Vol. 2: Arab-Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate, 1931-1948* (Totowa, NJ, London: Frank Cass, 1986).

⁸⁰ Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

loss for the Arab world. Like his father Faisal I, King Ghazi was a great Armenophile.

Saturday, April 15, turned out to be a day of great fear and terror for the people of Gaza, since one of its most prominent citizens, businessman Yousef Effendi Alami was assassinated at 6 o'clock in the morning as he was on his way to his store. An unidentified person shot him in the middle of the street and fled, while Alami immediately succumbed to his wounds. The minute the news of Alami's martyrdom began to spread, the whole population of Gaza flared up clamoring for revenge. Since neither the murderer was arrested, nor the cause of the assassination of this great nationalistic figure was revealed, therefore, all the well-known Arab figures of Gaza feared for their lives, and feeling threatened, remained indoors.

On April 30, 1939, a special luncheon was organized by the hospital staff on the occasion of my return to work. Then, I left for Jerusalem for two weeks and during this trip, I started seriously planning on relocating there. My dream consisted of opening a pharmacy in Jerusalem and eventually resigning from the hospital in Gaza. I hoped that I would finally put an end to this family separation and the continuous commuting for my children. Furthermore, Jirair could stop being a boarder and we could all live together. In order to execute this plan, I first had to look for a place to rent. Fortunately, I was informed that Khacho Manougian was planning to leave his hairdressing shop on Mamilla Road in downtown Jerusalem and move to the new national (*azkayin*) buildings. So I immediately contacted the landlord, Mr. Alexander Euclides, and on May 15, we signed a contract according to which I rented the premise.

The first step towards fulfilling my dream thus materialized and I was finally going to have my own pharmacy after

25 years. But I knew that managing a pharmacy alone in the center of a big city like Jerusalem, and being a non-resident myself, was going to be an arduous task for me, especially that Noubar was currently employed in the X-ray Department of the hospital and would not be able to join me for a while. So I asked him to get in touch with Nicola Harami (who for the past three years was working at Mavromikhali pharmacy) and inquire if he would be interested in partnering with us. Nicola accepted on condition that we sign a five-year contract.

In the meantime, I continued my work as hospital pharmacist in Gaza, while Noubar undertook the supervision of the refurbishment of the pharmacy (which formerly was used as a hairdressing shop) and began to order the appropriate furniture (*mobilia*). Often, I would nurture serious doubts about opening this pharmacy, especially during the month of September, when it became apparent that a general European War was imminent.⁸¹

But remaining firm in my decision, I overcame all my doubts and on November 1, 1939, I went to Jerusalem for two weeks to closely supervise the work and the refurnishing of the pharmacy. I also rented an apartment in Jerusalem (Upper Bekaa) in Mr. Merguer Merguerian's building.

Finally, entrusting all the final touches to Noubar, I returned for the last time to Gaza, to pack and make our final move to Jerusalem.

On January 1, 1940, after uttering the Work Prayer⁸² (*Ezkorts'ès ds'érats merots*), I started to work with Nicola at our new pharmacy. For the first six months, as work was

⁸¹ The declaration of war against Germany by Britain and France on September 3, 1939 is considered as the official outbreak of WWII. Cf. Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, (Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁸² Lord grant that the work of our hands be just and successful.

slow, we decided not to draw any income and invest all the money in stock. Eventually business started picking up successfully.

And so with a great sense of self-satisfaction and pleasure, I fulfilled my dream of settling in Jerusalem and starting a new pharmacy (my third) in this city. Surrounded by my wife and four children, I celebrated Christmas 1940 in the warmth of the Holy City with great hopes and wishes for world peace and prosperity.

Hagop Arsenian,
Jerusalem, 1941

Here ends the handwritten genocide and diaspora memoirs of pharmacist Hagop Arsenian from Ovajik, Nicomedia. In 1948, the Arsenians became refugees again with the partition of Palestine. They lost their home in West Jerusalem and the Mamilla pharmacy in No Man's Land, and had to relocate to East-Jerusalem, which became part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Until his death on September 30, 1963, Hagop Arsenian and his wife, Hrout (d. 1977), lived in Jerusalem (Jordan), surrounded by their children and nine grandchildren. Except for the eight members of the Arsenian and Gulemerian families who safely reached Jerusalem from Izmit in 1916, none of the other Arsenian family members were ever found or traced. (AAE)

List of Armenian Clergy Officiating Mass in Gaza 1929-1938

Date	Occasion	Priest	Deacon
1929 (May 12)	Easter (<i>Nor Giragi</i>)	Fr. Giuregh Israelian	
1930 (Jan. 19)	Armenian Christmas	Fr. Giuregh Israelian	Aghasi Sarkissian
1930 (Apr. 27)*	Easter	Fr. Giuregh Israelian	Aghasi Sarkissian
1931 (Jan. 24)	Arm. Christmas	Fr. Sion Manougian	Ghazaros Dischekenian
1931 (Apr. 18)	Easter	Fr. Shavarsh Kouyoumjian	Simon Mardirossian
1932 (Jan. 24)	Arm. Christmas	Fr. Barkev Vrtanesian	Papken Toumayan
1932 (May 8)	Easter	Fr. Tavit Chalekian	Yeghiazar Derderian
1933 (Jan. 21)	Arm. Christmas	Fr. Karekin Bulbulian	Hrant Minassian
1933 (Apr. 23)	Easter	Fr. Kevork Jansezian	Garabed Tnchukian
1934 (Jan. 20)	Arm. Christmas	Fr. Haigazoun Aprahamian	Sarkis Avedikian
1934 (Apr. 14)	Easter	Fr. Yeghishe Derderian	Garabed Gerjikian
1935 (Jan. 19)	Arm. Christmas	Fr. Housig Avedikian	Harutiun Hadidian
1935 (Apr. 18)	Easter	No Priest came	
1936 (Jan. 19)	Arm. Christmas	Fr. Dirair Dervishian	Armenag Voskeritchian
1936 (Apr. 19)	Easter	Fr. Sion Manougian	Noubar Terzian
1937 (Jan. 23)	Arm. Christmas	Housig Avedissian	alone
1937 (Apr.)	Easter	Nerces Kerovelian (our co-citizen)	
1938 (Jan.)	Arm. Christmas	Shnork Kalousdian	alone
1938 (Apr. 24)	Easter	Artoun Hadidian	Ashod Yeretsian

* While Father Giuregh was officiating mass, a telephone call from Jerusalem informed us of the death of Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian.

EPILOGUE

Deir Zor

APRIL 24, 2010

The luxurious bus transporting a group from Haigazian University is moving east towards the Syrian Desert, towards Deir Zor. The weather outside is freezing this April morning and in spite of my heavy jacket and boots, I feel quite chilly. But I dare not complain. I think of my people, who 95 years ago walked barefoot and naked on these sands and ... who never made it. As we approach the bridge over the Euphrates (actually it is the Habur, one of the tributaries of the Euphrates), my grandfather's words resonate in my ears: *"The officer told us when you reach the Bridge, NOT to cross it, for if you cross it you will surely meet certain death."* My grandfather and his eight family members did not cross it, and that is why they survived, but hundreds of thousands did, and met their death. This must have been the dividing line, these treacherous waters. If they could only tell their tales, what horror stories would they now recount? It is believed that the great number of bodies thrown in the river forced it to veer its course, as if to run away from the crime scenes, for even great rivers have their sense of dignity and code of ethics.¹

The bus stops in front of a small hill and a chapel. We are at Marqadeh, some 80 kilometers from the city of Deir Zor. The name instills such fear and horror in us, for this is the place of the bone hills we have so often heard about. The mound is not an archeological one formed by ancient remnants of past cultures but an artificial one a testimony

¹ Fisk, *Ibid.*, 397

of Ottoman civilization - The First Holocaust of the 20th century:² a pile of whitened clayish human skulls and skeletal remains of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. As for the shrine, it is a memorial, a final resting place for all those unburied, un-avenged souls. A monument in Arabic thanks the Syrian people for their hospitality towards the Armenian refugees.³ In the small chapel, which consists of an altar resting on skeletal remains, the pilgrims of this commemorative day utter silent prayers and weep. Here rest our ancestors, a whole generation of which we are the third generation of descendants. Yes, it is a great victory. *Only one Armenian was going to be left as a Museum sample*, but there are 10 million of us all over the world, and each one of us has a story to tell. I whisper a prayer for all of them and for all of the family members whom I never met.

As we step on the hill, local children come to us with small white bones. I refuse to take them. Let them rest in peace: they moved a lot, they walked a lot, this is their final resting place, I think to myself. Let us not disturb their peace again.

Our next stop is the Deir Zor Church, which houses the Resurrection column piled over more skeletal remains of Armenians, in addition to a Genocide Museum, and an eternal flame burning outside. The 95th commemoration and rituals are in process. I light a few candles in memory of all of them, but also a special one for my grandfather's mother, Mariam, whose remains are resting a few miles away in Meskene. What a great woman she must have been to risk her life for her family. There is no shrine there, and

² Ibid., 388-436.

³ Ever since the famous decree of Sharif Hussein of Mecca in 1919 requesting the fair treatment of Armenians (Appendix II), the Arab countries have hosted thousands of Armenians as equal citizens. Another monument will soon be erected in Yerevan, Armenia (www.themonument.org) to thank the Arab countries for hosting all the Armenian refugees.

no commemorative service either, but as Thucydides, the 5th century B.C. Greek historian once said, “*for famous men have the whole earth as their memorial.*”⁴ I utter a prayer for my grandfather and father, and place virtual flowers on their graves which lie in the Armenian Cemetery in Jerusalem, alas a place I cannot visit...⁵

I look at the maps and pictures of the Genocide Museum and at the gallery of the cities from which the Armenians were deported. One of them stands out: it is the picture of a city with a clock, it is Izmit and the Azaryan clock tower looking straight at me. Have we returned to the beginning or did we undergo a full circle? On the personal level, I feel an internal peace, almost a final closure. But on the national level, it is still not over; the march still goes on until “confession, repentance and restitution”⁶ is earned and international justice is obtained for all those whose blessed bones haunt the city of Deir Zor, for all the *unknown soldiers* who marched and perished on their final way of the cross, towards their own Golgotha.

⁴ Pericles’ Funeral Oration in Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, (Penguin Classics, 1972. Book 2), 149.

⁵ Since the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem in June 1967, residents of Lebanon cannot visit the Holy Land.

⁶ Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate: An American Son Uncovers his Armenian Past*. 2nd edition. New York: Basic Books, 2009, 291.

Hagop Arsenian's Timeline

Year / Month / Day	Event
1880, July	Born in Ovajik
1894	4 th grade Report Card from Vartanian National School-Ovajik
1900, July 23	Graduation from Vartanian National School-Ovajik
1898-1899	Krikor Effendi Harutunian becomes principal of Vartanian School-Ovajik
1900-1901	Assistant teacher at Vartanian School - Ovajik
1902, September	Pilgrimage to Armash
1902, September	Starts working in Onnig Effendi Kurdian's pharmacy-Izmit
1904	Registers as a pharmacy student at Istanbul University-Faculty of Medicine
1907, August 9	Receives Diploma in Pharmacy from Istanbul University
1907, August 15	The Young Graduate returns to Ovajik
1907, September 27	Buys Ardashes Jerahian's pharmacy and starts practice in Adabazar
1908, July 11	Ottoman Empire's constitution decreed economic reform
1908-1910	Pharmacy prospers and social status improves
1910, January 7	Gets engaged to Miss Hrout Gulemerian from Ovajik
1910, October 10	Marries Hrout Gulemerian in Ovajik
1910-1914	Elected Board member of the newly opened Central School in Adabazar
1912, July 29, Saturday	First son Noubar, born in Adabazar
1914, March, 1	Decides to move pharmacy from Adabazar to Izmit

1914, September 18	Norair, second child of Arsenians born in Izmit
1914, October	Father Arsen Der Harutiunian becomes principal of Izmit Armenian School
1914	WWI starts - Turkey declares Sefer Berlik
1915, July 15-20	Uprooting of the Armenian population of Geyve, in the suburb of Izmit
1915, July 20	Uprooting of the Armenian population of Adabazar, Arslanbeg and Ovajik
1915, July 24, Friday evening	The Prelacy of Izmit receives orders that all Armenians would have to leave within 24 hours.
1915, July 25, Saturday	All the goods and furniture of the Armenians of Izmit displayed on the sidewalks for sale.
1915, July 25, Saturday evening	Sends a telegram signed by the Prelate to the Patriarch informing of departure
1915, July 26	Deportation from Izmit
1915, July 27 Monday	Arrival at the Arifieh station - continues to Veshir Khan and Bilejik stations
1915, July 28	Reaches before dawn to Eskişehir
1915, July 28 evening	Arrival at Konya station
1915, July 30	Arrival at Karaman Station
1915, August 9, Sunday	Displacement of Armenians of Konya and Karaman started
1915, August 12, Wednesday	Arrival at midnight at Ereğli Station
1915, August 28, Friday	Early morning reaches Bozüyük
1915, September 3, Thursday	Khan Chifteh Haoush - meets Dr. Zareh Loutoufian

1915, September 4, Friday	Giuleg Station of Tarsus
1915, November 9	Arrival at Adana Osmaniye Station
1915, November 10	Arrival at Mamura Station
1915, November 11	Arrival at Hassan Beyli
1915, November 12	Climbing Mount Amanus. (Giavour Dagh) - Intilli
1915, November 13	Arrival at Islahiye
1915, December 4	Arrival at Aktarina
1915, December 5	Arrival at Katma
1915, December 8	Arrival at noon at Bab Station
1915, December 9	Meets Hrant Mardirossian from Izmit in Bab.
1915, December 12	Arrival at Meskene
1915, December 22	Mother Mariam Arsenian dies and is buried in Meskene
1915, December 31	Arrival at Dipsi
1916, January 2	Cousin (Morakouyr's son) Bedros Agha Varnajian dies
1916, January 5,	Armenian Christmas Eve - Arrival at Abu Harar
1916, April	Still at Abu Harar, Euphrates waters rising and filled with bodies
1916, June 9	Returns to Meskene with professionals and artisans
1916, July 13	Runs away to Aleppo - Meets Enezé tribe on way
1916, July 28 Sunday	Takes train to Jerusalem - meets Levon Effendi Zakarian (Ali Haydar Bey) on his way to Tripoli
1916, August 3	Reaches Jerusalem - St James Church where he witnesses the installation of Catholicos Sahag of Sis

1916, September, 14-18	Returns to Aleppo to collect family
1916, September 25	Arsenian Family and relatives safely reach Jerusalem
1917, November 6	Drafted to fight British entering Palestine
1917, November 9	Departure for Nablus
1917, November	Departure for Mas'oudiye-Deraa-Damascus
1917, December 9	British occupy Jerusalem
1918, May 28	Declaration of Independence of Armenia
1918, September 13	From Damascus - sent to join 8 th regiment in Tulkarem (Palestine)
1918, September 19	Allied Forces attack Tulkarem - Prisoner of War
1918, September 20	Transported to Ras el Ain
1918, September 22, Sunday	POW transportation to Kantara-Gaza-Rafah, el-Arish, Suez Canal
1918, October 2	Ismailiya, Zagazeg, Denha reaching the station of Quweisna (POWs reservation)
1919, January 7	Released and sent to Jerusalem
1919, January 14	Celebration of Armenian New Year (Julian Calendar) with family in Jerusalem
1919 January 27	Arsenian Family moves to Bethlehem-Hagop Arsenian starts work as government dispenser
1921	Treaty of Sèvres
1919-1921	Work and Residence in Bethlehem
1921, February 26	Daughter Arsiné born in Bethlehem
1921, March 24	Transfer to Gaza
1922	Deportations from Smyrna and Cilicia
1923, October 8	Hagop and Hrout Arsenian visit Egypt

1923, October 24	Starts working at Church Missionary Hospital (CMS) in Gaza
1923, November 24	Sister-in-law Verkine marries Hovhannes Kafafian from Urfa
1924, January 26	Jirair Askanaz, third son and fourth child born in Gaza
1924, October	Noubar and Norair attend Armenian School (Azkayin Varjaran) in Jerusalem
1927, July	Earthquake in Nablus, Lydda and Ramleh
1928, March 14	Celebrates 50 th anniversary of Gaza CMS Hospital
1928, March 16	Transfer to Nablus for a month under supervision of Dr. Pigeon
1928, April 16	Troubles in Gaza. Muslim Brotherhood demonstrations against International Missionary Meeting
1928, October	Noubar joins the British Bishop Gobat School in Jerusalem
1929, March	Dr. Hargreaves joins CMS Hospital-Gaza
1929, April	Armenian Masses held in Gaza for Armenian Community (Father Giuregh Israelian)
1929, August	Troubles in Palestine and anti-Jewish manifestations
1929, October	Arsiné joins the newly opened Tarkmanchatz school in Jerusalem
1930, January 6	Trip to Egypt to renew pharmacist's practising license
1930, April 27	Patriarch Yeghishe Tourian of Jerusalem dies
1930, May	Catholicos Kevork of Etchmiadzin passes away
1930, September	Boghos Noubar Pasha passes away

1931, July 15	Noubar graduates from Bishop Gobat School
1931, November 26	Torkom Koushagian elected Patriarch of Jerusalem
1932, July	Spends a month in Nablus replacing pharmacist Hajj Nouredine Arafat at CMS Hospital
1932, November	Archbishop Khoren Mouradbekian elected new Catholicos of Etchmiadzin
1933, August	Visit to Haifa, Acre, Tiberias, al-Himmah spas
1933, October	Buys piece of land in Gaza between the coast and the city.
1933, December	Archbishop Ghevont Tourian, Primate of America, stabbed in New York
1934, July 12	Norair graduates from Bishop Gobat School
1934, July 13	Arsiné graduates from elementary school at St. Tarkmanchatz in Jerusalem
1934, August	Norair joins Barclays Bank in Haifa
1935, June 25	Attends Noubar's Graduation at AUB, Beirut.
1936, January	Hagop & Hrout Arsenian Celebrate 25 th wedding anniversary (October 10, 1910)
1936, January	King George V of Great Britain passes away, Edward VIII becomes king
1936, April 20	Troubles in Palestine
1936, May 25	Troubles in Gaza
1936, September 12	George VI accedes to throne of Britain after abdication of Edward VIII
1936, October 12	Six months strike ends in Palestine after Arab-British meeting.
1937, April	Krikor Mekhalian, Arsenian's teacher, dies in Cairo

1937, September 29	Patriarch Torkom Koushagian visits Gaza for 2 days
1937,	Peel Commission Partition Plan for Palestine
1938, January 7	Sick with <i>erysipelas</i>
1938, March 12	Hitler invades Austria
1938, April 10	News of death of Catholicos Khoren I in Armenia
1938, July	Arsiné graduates from High School and sits for Palestinian matriculation
1938, August	Troubles in Palestine, Arsenians take vacation in Lebanon
1938, October 3	Jirair joins the Bishop Gobat School in Jerusalem
1939, February 7	Round Table Conference in London for Arab and Palestinian Leaders to discuss future of Palestine
1939, April 1	H. Arsenian has hernia operation
1939, April 4	King Ghazi of Iraq killed in car accident. Faisal II, 4 year-old son becomes king
1939, April 15	Businessman Yousef Effendi Alami assassinated in Gaza
1939, April 30	Trip to Jerusalem, rents pharmacy in Mamilla, Jerusalem and signs contract with Nicola Harami
1940, January	Opens Arsenian-Harami pharmacy in Mamilla Road-Jerusalem
1948, May	Partition of Palestine, Arsenian loses pharmacy and home and relocates to Arab Jerusalem
1950	With son Noubar, opens The Jerusalem Grand Pharmacy on Rashid Street, Jerusalem, Jordan
1963, September 30	Hagop Arsenian dies in Jerusalem

APPENDIX I

Official Ottoman Proclamation

Ordering the Deportation of the Armenians¹

June 1915

﴿ طرز و نده مشورت ﴾

٤ صفحه

بیاننامه رسمی

عناصر عثمانیه اجزاسند. بولنان ارمنی وطنداشلر مژک بر خیل سسلردن بری تلقبات خارجه نمردی اوله رق برطاق افکار سقمه و آسایش شکتنا به قایلهرق کندی راحت ومنفعتلرله برابر ملک عثمانیک و دیگر وطنداشلرینک حضور وسکوئی اخلال وقائی وقایه اجتنار وهله ارمنی جماعتک دخی دشمن موجودتی اولان والیدم حکومتزله محارب بولنان اعدایه التحاق جساتنده بولغلی هم ملکک محافظه سکون واستراحتی وهم ارمنی جماعتک ادامه موجودیت وسلامتی ایچون دولتمزی فوقالعاده تدابیر وفداکارلق اخذاز واختیارنه مجبور ایدرک ختام حربه دکن مک واقامه اتمک اوزره ارمنی جماعتی ولایات داخلیده احضار ابتدکی محله سسوقه مجبور قالش اولدیتندن بالجله عثمانیلره وصایای آتیبه حرفیاً اطاعت اتملی صورت قطعیده اخطار اولنور .

- ١ - خستلر مستبنا اولق اوزره بالمعوم ارمنیلر تاریخ تبلیغندن پیش کون سکره ژاندارمه نک محافظه سی تحتتده کاملاً کوی وعمله اعتبارله حرکت اتمک مجبوریتنده ددر .
- ٢ - انشای حرکتلرنده اشیای منقولهلرندن آرزو ابتدکلری برابر کوتورمکده سرست ایسه لرده غیر منقول املاک واراضیلرینی وفصله اشیایرینی صامتقدن وشونک بونک یانه برافقندن منعودرلر . چونکه کیفیت مفارقت موت اولسی حبیبه اموال غیر منقولهلرله برابر آلیه جقلری اشیای منقولهلری محفوظ ومضبوط بنالر داخلنده ودنک حائده حکومتک نظارتی تحتتده حفظ اولنورق عودتلرنده عیناً کندیله ااده قله جندر . اموال منقوله وغیر منقولهلری خلاف تنیه آلان وصاتان ومحافظه ایدن دیوان حربه سوق اولنه جقدر . بالکزاردونک احتیاجاته یارایه بیهلجک شیلرک بالرضا حکومه صائلی جاژدر .
- ٣ - انشای راهده تأمین استراحتلری ایچون خانلر ومناسب بنالر احضار ایتدیرلش وبرکونانجاوز وتعرضه مروض قالمقیزین موت اقامتکاهلرینه سالماً ایصاللری اسبابی استکمال قلمشدر .
- ٤ - ارمنی ٥ - یندن بر یاخود بر قاچنک مال ، جان ، عرضنه تجاوز وتعرضه بولنانلرهمفرزه لرسلاح استعمال ایدمک وحیا دردت اولنه جقدر دیوان حربه سوق ایدیلرک اعدام اولنه جقدردر . ارمنیلرک اغفالته قایلملری تیجه مؤسفسی اولان شو تدبیرک جماعات سائرته برکونه تعلق اولدیتندن عناصر سائرهمنه شیکلی ومارزده اولورسه اولسون بومستله به قطعاً مداخله ایجه جکدر .
- ٥ - ارمنیلر حکومتک شو قرارینه تبعیت مجبور اولدقلرندن ایچلرند عسکر ژاندارمه اوزرته سلاح استعمالی جراتنده بولن اولورسه بالکزار سلاح استعمال ایدنلر بالمقابل سلاح استعمالیه میتا دردت ایدیلجکدر . کذا حکومتک قرارینه مخالفتله کیشمکدن امتناع ایدنلر وشوراده بوراده اخفا ایلیانلر ایله بوکیلیر خانه لرده ماقلایان وبیهلجک ویرک واخفسالری تأمین ایدن کسان برای اعدام دیوان حربه کوندیرله جکدر .

٦ - ارمنیلر یانلرند اسلحه چارجه وناریه طاشیهه جقلرندن مسککلری داخل وخارجنده صافلاش اولدقلری هر نوع سلاح ، طابعیه وبوبیا وقالری کاملاً حکومته تسلیم ایدمکچکدر . بوکی اسلحه وسائرذن بر خیلسی حکومته اخبار ایدلش اولدیتندن اولا وادی افکاره صائلی وموخرأ حکومت

¹ Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*. Edited by Susan K. Blair. (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, Publisher), 1989. 187-190

- طرفدن الله ابدلى ساحبارنك شديد مسئوليت و تحيز به سنى انتاج ابدء جكدرد .
- ۷ - كوى و محله و بولارده غصب و غارت و سائرء ايجون ارنيلره تعرض و تجاوز تشبده بولنه چقلره محافظ عسكر ژاندارملر سلاح استعمال ايدرك بوكى اشخاصى اتلافه مجبور و مأذوندرلر .
- ۸ - بانق عثمانى به دينى اولانلر دينه مقابيل اشياى بانق ارضيه سته تسليم ابدء بيليرلر . آنحق حكومت ايلروده لزوم حس ايتديكى حالده اشياى مذكوره يي جهت عسكرى حسابنه و تسليم اولنان بدل مقابلنده ساتون آلمه صلاحيتداردر . اشخاص سائرء به اولان ذمت ايجون دىي بوشلرط دائره سنده اشيا تركى جائز اولوب انحق ذمتكدهنى حكومتجه بمحقق انجليدر بولك ايجون دىي تجاركمصدق دفاترى لك برنجى دليل تشكيل ايدر .
- ۹ - كوتورلىسى ممكن اولميان بولك و كوچك حيوانات اردو نامه ساتون الله جقدر .
- ۱۰ - كذكر كاهدهكى حاجه ، قضا ، لوا و ولايتلر مأمورىنى ارمى جماعته قابل اجرا معاوتى ايفسا ابدء جكدرد .
- س ۱۳ جزيران سنه ۳۳۱

Enclosure to a despatch from the
American Consul at Trebizond to the
Embassy at Constantinople dated
June 28, 1915.

TRANSLATION: OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION

Our Armenian fellow countrymen, who form one of the Ottoman racial elements, having taken up with a lot of false ideas of a nature to disturb the public order, as the result of foreign instigations for many years past, and because of the fact that they have brought about bloody happenings and have attempted to destroy the peace and security of the Ottoman state, of their fellow countrymen, as well as their own safety and interests, and, moreover, as the Armenian societies now have dared to join themselves to the enemy of their existence, and to the enemies now at war with our state, our Government is compelled to adopt extraordinary measures and sacrifices, both for the preservation of the order and security of the country, and for the continuation of their existence and for the welfare of the Armenian societies. Therefore, as a measure to be applied until the conclusion of the war, the Armenians have to be sent away to places which have been prepared in the interior vilayets, and a literal obedience to the following orders, in a categorical manner, is accordingly enjoined upon all Ottomans:-

1---With the exception of the sick, all Armenians are obliged to

leave, within five days from the date of this proclamation, and by villages or quarters, under the escort of the gendarmery.

2---Although they are free to carry with them on their journey the articles of their movable property which they desire, they are forbidden to sell their landed and their extra effects, or to leave them here and there with other people. Because their exile is only temporary, their landed property, and the effects which they will be unable to take with them will be taken care of under the supervision of the Government, and stored in closed and protected buildings. Any one who sells or attempts to take care of his movable effects or landed property in a manner contrary to this order shall be sent before the Court Martial. They are only free to sell to the Government, of their own accord, those articles which may answer the needs of the army.

3---To assure their comfort during the journey, hans and suitable buildings have been prepared, and everything has been done for their safe arrival at their places of temporary residence, without their being subjected to any kind of attack or affronts.

4---The guards will use their weapons against those who make any attempts to attack or affront the life, honor, and property of one or of a number of Armenians, and such persons as are taken alive will be sent to the Court Martial and executed. This measure being the regrettable result of the Armenians having been led into error, it does not concern in any way the other races, and these other elements will in no way or manner whatsoever intervene in this question.

5---Since the Armenians are obliged to submit to this decision of the Government, if some of them attempt to use arms against the soldiers or gendarmes, arms shall be employed only against those who use force, and they shall be captured dead or alive. In like manner, those who, in opposition to the Government's decision, refrain from leaving, or hide themselves here and there, if they are sheltered or are given food and assistance, the persons who thus shelter them or aid them shall be sent before the Court Martial for execution.

6---As the Armenians are not allowed to carry any firearms or cutting weapons, they shall deliver to the authorities every sort of arms, revolvers, daggers, bombs, etc, which they have concealed in their places of residence or elsewhere. A lot of such weapons and other things have been reported to the Government, and if their owners allow themselves to be misled, and the weapons are afterwards found by the Government, they will be under heavy responsibility and receive severe punishment.

7---The escorts of soldiers and gendarmes are required and are authorized to use their weapons against and to kill persons who shall try to attack or to damage Armenians in villages, in city quarters, or on the roads for the purpose of robbery or other injury.

8---Those who owe money to the Ottoman Bank may deposit in its warehouses goods up to the amount of their indebtedness. Only in

case the Government should have need thereof in the future are the military authorities authorized to buy the said goods by paying the price therefor. In the case of debts to other people it is permitted to leave goods in accordance with this condition, but the Government must ascertain the genuine character of the debt, and for this purpose the certified books of the merchant form the strongest proof.

9---Large and small animals which it is impossible to carry along shall be bought in the name of the army.

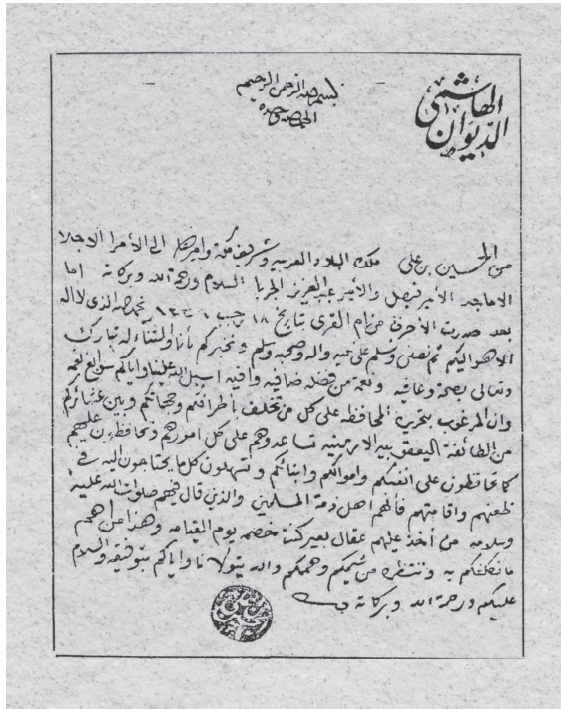
10--On the road the vilayet, leva, kaza and nahieh officials shall render possible assistance to the Armenians.

13/25 June 1331/1915.

SOURCE: Copy handed by the vali of Trebizond to U.S. consul Oscar Heizer and forwarded to the U.S. Department of State, June 28, 1915, N.A., D.S., R.G. 59, Dec. File No. 867.4016/85. The English translation is from N.A., D.S., R.G. 59, Dec. File No. 867.4016/114.

APPENDIX II

Sharif Hussein Ben Ali of Arabia Proclaiming Protection and Assistance to Armenians



Decree issued in 1917 by the Sharif of Mecca for the
Protection of Armenians¹

The Hashemite Royal Court

In the Name of God, The Compassionate, The Merciful We
Thank Only God And No One But God

From Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, King of the Arab Lands and Sharif of
Mecca and its Prince to The Honorable and Admirable Princes —
Prince Faisal and Prince Abd al-'Aziz al-Jarba — greetings and the
compassion of God and His blessings. This letter is written from

¹ Harut Sassounian, compiler, *The Armenian Genocide: Documents & Declarations, 1915-1995* (Glendale: 80th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee, 1995), 62-63.

Imm Al-Qura (Mecca), on 18 Rajab 1336 [A.D. 1917], by the praise of God and no God except Him. We ask peace upon God's Prophet, his family and his companions (may peace be upon him). We inform you that in our gratitude to Him we are in good health, strength and good grace. We pray God that He may grant us and you His abundant grace. What is requested of you is to protect and to take good care of everyone from the Jacobite Armenian community living in your territories and frontiers and among your tribes; to help them in all of their affairs and defend them as you would defend yourselves, your properties and children, and provide everything they might need whether they are settled or moving from place to place, because they are the Protected People of the Muslims (Ahl Dimmat al-Muslimin) — about whom the Prophet Muhammad (may God grant him His blessings and peace) said: "Whosoever takes from them even a rope, I will be his adversary on the day of Judgment." This is among the most important things we require of you to do and expect you to accomplish, in view of your noble character and determination. May God be our and your guardian and provide you with His success. Peace be upon you with the mercy of God and His blessings.

Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ajemian Ahnert, Margaret. *The Knock at the Door: A Journey through the Darkness of the Armenian Genocide*. New York: Beaufort Books, 2007.
- Akçam, Taner. *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2006.
- Arlen, Michael J. *Passage to Ararat*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.
- Avrikian, Edouard. *Mon Exode de Smyrne*. Montréal: 2007.
- Baghdjian, Kevork K. *The Confiscation of Armenian Properties by the Turkish Government Said to be Abandoned*. Translated and Edited by A.B. Gureghian. Antelias: Khatchig Babikian Literary Fund. № 3, 2010.
- Barton, James L. *“Turkish Atrocities”: Statements of American Missionaries on the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Empire 1915-1917*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Gomidas Institute, 1998.
- Balakian, Grigoris. *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*. Translated by Peter Balakian with Aris Sevag. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.
- Balakian, Peter. *Black Dog of Fate: An American Son Uncovers his Armenian Past*. 2nd edition. New York: Basic Books, 2009.

- _____. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.
- Bardakjian, Kevork B. *Hitler and the Armenian Genocide*. Cambridge, Massachussets: Zoryan Institute Special Report Number 3, 1985.
- Bedoukian, Kerop. *The Urchin: An Armenian's Escape*. John Murray, London 1978. Also published in the USA as *Some of Us Survived*. John Murray, NY. 1978.
- Biberian, A. and Yeghicheyan, V. *Badmakirk Adapazari* (History of Adabazar). Paris: 1960.
- Bobelian, Michael. *Children of Armenia. A Forgotten Genocide and Century-Long Struggle for Justice*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 2009.
- Bournoutian, George A. *A Concise History of the Armenian People: From Ancient Times to the Present*, 2nd ed. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2002.
- Bryce, James and Toynbee, Arnold J. *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916. Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Falloden by Viscount Bryce*. Ed. Ara Sarafian, Princeton, New Jersey: Gomidas Institute, 2000.
- Cetin, Fethiye. *My Grandmother: A Memoir*. Translated by Maureen Freely. London and New York: Verso, 2008.
- Chitjian, Hampartzoum Mardiros. *A Hair's Breadth from Death: Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian*. London and Reading: Taderon Press, 2004.
- Dadrian, Vahakn. *Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in German and Austrian Sources*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994.

- _____. *Documentation of the Armenian Genocide in Turkish sources*. Jerusalem: Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, 1991.
- _____. *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*. Providence, RI. and Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books, 1995.
- _____. "The Role of the Special Organisation in the Armenian Genocide during the First World War." *Minorities in Wartime*, ed. Panikos Panayi, 50-82. Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1993.
- _____. "The Secret Young Turk Ittihadist Conference and the Decision for the World War I Genocide of the Armenians," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 7,(2) (Fall 1993): 173-174.
- _____. *Warrant for Genocide: Key Elements of Turko-Armenian Conflict*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999.
- Dadrian, Vahram. *To the Desert: Pages from My Diary*. Translated from the Armenian by Agop J. Hacikyan, ed. Ara Sarafian, Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2003.
- Davis, Leslie A. *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1917*. Edited by Susan K. Blair. New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, Publisher, 1989.
- Der Alexanian, Jacques. *Le Ciel était noir sur l'Euphrate. La tragique histoire des Arméniens*. Paris: Edition Laffont, 1988.
- Der Yeghiayan, Zaven. *Badryarkagan Housheres* (My Patriarchal Memoirs). Cairo: Nor Asdgh, 1947.

- Derdarian, Mae M. *Vergeen, A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide, Based on a memoir by Virginia Meghrouni*. Los Angeles: ATMUS Press Publication, 1996.
- Dobkin, Marjorie Housepian. *Smyrna, 1922: The Destruction of a City*. New York: Newmark Press, 1998.
- Elmajian, Eflatoon E. *In the Shadow of the Almighty, My Life Story*. Pasadena, California: 1982.
- Fisk, Robert. *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*. London: Fourth Estate, 2005.
- Ghazarian, Haigazn K. *Tseghaspan Turke, (Genocide Committed by Turks)*, 2nd ed. Antelias: Khatchig Babikian Literary Fund, № 5, 2010.
- Graber, G. S. *Caravans to Oblivion. The Armenian Genocide, 1915*. USA: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1996.
- Hartunian, Abraham H. *Neither to Laugh nor to Weep. A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide*. Translated from the original Armenian manuscripts by Vartan Hartunian. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.
- Haslip, Joan. *The Sultan: the Life of Abdul Hamid II*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973.
- Hovannisian, Richard. ed. *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007.
- _____. *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics and Ethics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- _____. *The Armenian Holocaust: a Bibliography relating to the Deportations, Massacres, and Dispersion of the Armenian People, 1915-1923*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Armenian Heritage Press, 1980.

- _____. ed. *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998.
- Jernazian, Ephraim K. *Judgement unto Truth, Witnessing the Armenian Genocide*. Translated by Alice Haig. New Brunswick (USA) and London: Transaction Publishers, 1990.
- Kaiser, Hilmar. "The Baghdad Railway and the Armenian Genocide 1915-1916: A Case Study in German Resistance and Complicity", in *Remembrance and Denial: the Case of the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Hovannisian, Richard G., 67-112. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998.
- _____. in collaboration with Luther and Nancy Eskijian. *At the Crossroads of Der Zor: Death, Survival and Humanitarian Resistance in Aleppo, 1915-1917*. Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, Taderon 2002.
- _____. "Regional resistance to central government policies: Ahmed Djemal Pasha, the governors of Aleppo, and the Armenian deportees in the spring and summer of 1915", *Journal of Genocide Research* 12: 3, (2010): 173-218.
- Kassabian, Minas K. (Farhad). *Hayere Nigometio Kavarin Mech, Ousoumnasiroutiun, Vijakragan tsoutsagnerov yev karderov*. (The Armenians in the Province of Nicomedia: A study with Statistics, Tables and Maps.) Bardizag: Azadamard Press, 1913.
- Kebekian, Ohannes. *Adapazar Asdvatdzaryal aba Nahadagyal* (Adabazar God Given and Martyred). Paris: 1966.

- Kerr, Stanley E. *The Lions of Marash, Personal Experiences with American Near East Relief 1919-1922*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973.
- Ketchian, Bertha Nakshian. *In the Shadow of the Fortress: The Genocide Remembered*. Cambridge, Mass: The Zoryan Institute, Survivors' Memoirs 1, 1988.
- Kévorkian, Raymond. *The Armenian Genocide. A Complete History*. New York and London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2011.
- . *The Extermination of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk Regime (1915-1916)*, Online Encyclopaedia of Mass Violence. [published on 3 June 2008]: <http://www.massviolence.org/The-Extermination-of-Ottoman-Armenians-by-the-Young-Turk-Regime>, 11, 2008.
- Kévorkian, Raymond H. and Paboudjian, Paul B. *Les Arméniens dans l'empire Ottoman à la veille du Génocide*. Paris: Editions d'Art et d'Histoire ARHIS, 1992.
- Kilejian, Seta. *Verabroghner ge Vegayen* (Survivors Testify). Beirut: Hamazkayin Vahe Setian Press, 2005.
- Lepsius, Johannes. *Deutschland und Armenien; Sammlung Diplomatischer Aktenstuecken* (Germany and Armenia: A Collection of Diplomatic Documents). Bremen: Donat & Temmen, 1986.
- Lemkin, Raphael. *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, 1944.
- Libaridian, Gerard. *A Crime of Silence: The Armenian Genocide*. Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, Cambridge, Mass.: The Zoryan Institute, 1985.

- Mardiganian, Aurora (Arshaluys). *Ravished Armenia*. Astoria, N.Y: J.C. & A.L. Fawcett, 1990. Originally Published: New York, 1918.
- Marshall Lang, David. *Armenia: Cradle of Civilization*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970.
- Miller, Donald E. and Miller, Lorna Touryan. *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993.
- Morgenthau, Henry. *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003. First published in 1919 by Doubleday, Page, Garden City, N.Y.
- Mutevelian, Haroutiune. *Mémoires de l'exil de 1915*. Paris: 1984.
- Nartouni, Chavarche. "Quitter Armache" (Leaving Armash) In *Nos terres d'enfance. L'Arménie des souvenirs* (Lands of our Childhood: Armenia of our Memories), eds. Anahide Ter Minassian and Houri Varjabédian, 165-172. Marseilles & Beirut: Editions Dar an-Nahar/Parentèses, 2010.
- Odian, Yervant. *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return from Der Zor, 1914-1919*. Translated from the original Armenian by Ara Stepan Melkonian with an introduction by Krikor Beledian. London: Gomidas Institute, 2009.
- Panayi, Panikos. ed. *Minorities in Wartime. National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America and Australia during the Two World Wars*. Oxford/ Providence: Berg, 1993.

- Pilibosian, Khachadoor. *They called me Mustafa: Memoir of an Immigrant*. Coauthored and edited with additional information by Helene Pilibosian. Watertown, Mass: Ohan Press, 1992.
- Sahakian, Mariam V. (Garougian). Trans/ed. *Destiny of the Dizdzerzag. Autobiography of Varteres Mikael Garougian*. Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, Taderon Press, 2005.
- Sarafian, Ara. ed. *United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917*. Princeton and London: Gomidas Institute, 2004.
- Sassounian, Harut. *The Armenian Genocide: The World Speaks Out, 1915-2005*. Beirut: Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee, 2005.
- Shirinian, Lorne. *Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide*. UK: Taderon Press, 1999.
- Seropian, Hagop. *Yegherni Housheres: Hagop A. Seropian (My Genocide Memoirs: Hagop A. Seropian)*, ed. Antranig Dakessian. Beirut: Photogravure Paklayan, 2005.
- Svazlian, Verjine. *The Armenian Genocide and Historical Memory*. Translated from the Armenian by Tigran Tsulikian. Yerevan: Gitutian Pub. House of the NAS RA, 2004.
- Ter Minassian, Anahide and Varjabédian, Hourì. *Nos terres d'enfance. L'Arménie des souvenirs*. Marseilles: Editions Dar An-Nahar / Parenthèses, 2010.
- Tavoukdjian, Serpouhi. *Exiled. Story of an Armenian Girl*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1933.

- Toynbee, Arnold J. *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*. New York: Tankian Publishing, 1975. First Published in 1971 by Hodder and Stroughton, London.
- Walker, Christopher J. *Armenia: The Survival of a Nation*, Revised 2nd ed. England: Routledge, 1990.
- Werfel, Franz. *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, 2nd ed. New York: Carroll & Graf Pub. 1990. First published in 1933 by Paul Zsolnay Verlag A.G.
- Zürcher, Erik J. *Turkey: A Modern History*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1994.

INDEX

- A** _____
- Abdul Hamid II (Sultan) xviii, 3, 12, 36, 220
- Abu Harar (Abou Herrera) 62, 113, 115, 117, 119, 122–124, 205
- Acre 148, 156, 172, 176, 208
- Adabazar (Adapazar, Ada-Bazar) xix, xxv, *xxvi*, 9–10, 12, 14–16, 41–44, 53–55, 60, 62–64, 84–85, 124–126, 142, 176, 185, 203–204, 218, 221 *Pls. II, IV Adabazartsi* 64, 84, 124, 185
- Adana xix, *xxvi*, 4, 59, 62, 85, 91, 205
- Adilian, Aram 37
- Adiyaman 62, 143
- Adrianople (Edirne) 49
- Afion Karahisar (Afon Kara Hissar) 65, 142–143
- AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union) xvii, 166
- Aghamalian, Noubar 143
- Agn *xxvi*, 9, 14
- Aintab 126, 142–143
- Akhterim xix, 62, 97–104
- Akshehir 63, 117, 124, 142
- Alami, Yousef 193–194, 209
- Aleppo xv, 29, 56, 62, 79, 91, 93–94, 97–98, 105, 107, 109, 113, 118, 123–130, 205–206, 221 *Pl. V*
- Alexandria 151, 154, 164
- Al-Himmah spas 171, 208
- Allahverdian, Haig 33
- Allied Forces 6, 50, 149, 153
- Amanus (Amanos) 86, 91, 93–94, 205
- amele taburi (labor battalions)* 86, 89, 134
- American University of Beirut (AUB) xxii, 127, 169, 171–172, 175, 177, 178, 208 *Pl. XIII*
- Anatolia *xxvi*, 1, 2, 11, 49, 92, 152, 219
- Andonian
Aram 76, 87
Onnig 36
- Angora (Ankara) 52, 62, 78, 81, 84, 153
- Ani (City) *xxvi*, 2
- Antelias 6, 13, 66, 176, 184, 217, 220
- Antioch 142
- Antranigian, Krikor 143
- Apia Ceasarea 184
- Aprahamian, Haigazoun (Fr.) 173, 198
- Arabian, Armenag 77

- Arab-Israeli War xx
 Arabs xviii, xxi, 4, 103, 120, 162,
 173, 179, 180, 182, 183, 188, 190
 Arafat, Hajj Nouredin 169, 208
 Arapkir 9
 Ararat 1, 7
Arev Newspaper 153, 162, 163,
 168, 176, 177, 186
 Arifieh Station 63, 204
 Armash 10, 33, 53, 203, 223
 Armenia xvii, xxvi, 1, 5–6, 12,
 43, 47, 55, 57, 73, 105, 140, 149,
 156–157, 166, 170, 200, 206,
 209, 218, 222–223, 225
 Eastern Armenia 152
 Historical Armenia xxvi, 6
 Independence of Armenia
 140, 206
 Little Armenia 2 *See* Cilicia
 Republic of Armenia 154
 Soviet Armenia 5, 6, 154, 190
 Western Armenia 2
 Armenian
 Diaspora xxiii, 5
 Genocide xxiv–xxvi, 4–5, 7, 9,
 11, 14, 16, 49, 79, 81, 200
 Patriarchate xix, 9, 15, 161
 Question 6
 Arsenian
 Ankiné xv *Pl. XVI*
 Arsen (Arsenian's Father) 25
 Elvira xxii *Pl. XX*
 Hagop(ig) Norair *Pls. XVI, XVII*
 HROUT Gulemerian xxi, 9, 14,
 42, 57, 84, 130, 150, 175–176,
 189, 196, 203, 206, 208 *Pls.*
IV, XI, XIII, XVI, XVII, XIX
 Jirair xxii–xxiii, 156, 161, 166,
 169, 175–176, 179–180, 184,
 186, 189, 192–194, 207, 209
 Mariam xv, 25, 102, 200, 205
 Natalia vii
 Norair xv, 9, 12, 14, 48, 59,
 75, 84, 86, 100, 102–104,
 105–106, 115, 121, 126, 130,
 135, 150, 153, 155–156, 158,
 161, 164–172, 172, 174–179,
 182, 184, 188, 193, 204, 207,
 208
 Norig vii
 Noubar xxii, 9, 12, 14–15,
 42–43, 59, 75, 84–85, 100,
 102–103, 115, 121, 126, 130,
 135, 140, 143, 150, 152–153,
 155–156, 160, 164–172, 174–
 178, 177, 182, 188, 192–193,
 195, 203, 207–209
 Seta *Pl. XVII*
 Sirarpi Krakirian xv, xxii
 Arsenian family xv, xix–xx, xxii–
 xxiii, 9, 14, 196 *Pls. IV, XI, XIII,*
XVI, XVII, XIX
Arsenoghhus 15
 Arslanbeg 10, 53–54, 70, 125, 204
Arslanbegtsi 70
 Artinian, H. (Dr.) 43
 Ashekian, Zareh 142
 Asia Minor 9, 49
 Assyrians 1
 Atatürk 6, 15 *See* Mustafa Kemal
 Attamian
 Arnaud vii
 Edouard (Dr.) xxii, 16
 Garabed 16
 Karine vii
 Sona Arsenian ix, xxii, 16
Pls. XVI, XVIII
 Aughostos Agha 66
 Austria 50, 134, 189, 209, 218
 Avedikian
 Housig (Fr.) 175, 184, 185, 198
 Sarkis (Deacon) 173, 198

- Awkaf (Supreme Islamic Council)* 119
 188 *Pl. XV*
 Awni Bey (Major) 135–136
 Azaryan, Mihran 12
 Azaryan Clock 201 *Pl. II*
 Azaz 62, 98–99, 105
- B** _____
 Bab xix, 62, 100, 102, 105–107,
 192, 205
 Bab el Darun 192
 Baghbaghian, H. 110
 Baghdad 53, 98, 121, 185
 Baghdad Railway 11, 59,
 63–64, 221
 Baghdassar Bey 128
 Baghdassarian, Krikor 142
 Bagratouni Dynasty 2
 Baha'i 171–172
 Balakian
 Grigoris 49, 53, 91, 217
 Peter 11, 49, 217
 Balekjian, Garabed 72, 74
 Balfour Declaration 181
 Balian, Hagop (Dr.) 48
 Barclays Bank 174, 179, 208
 Bardizag (Baghchejig) 10, 16,
 36, 53–54, 56, 59, 60, 81, 85,
 142–143, 167, 185, 221
bashibozoukh (irregular soldier)
 80
 Basmadjian, Vartkes (Deacon)
 171, 175
 Beguian, Haig 142
 Behistun Rock 1
 Beirut xxii, xxiv–xxvi, 7, 12, 33,
 43, 66–67, 127–128, 148, 156,
 166–172, 175–178, 182, 184, 191,
 208, 222–224 *Pl. XIII, XX*
bekchibashi (head watchman)
- Benha 140
 Berberian
 Garabed 28
 Mikayel 81
 Bernau, August 109, 113
 Beshig Tash 143
 Beshirian, Harutiun 142
 Bethlehem 19, 21–22, 149–151,
 206 *Pl. X*
 Bilejik (Bileçik) 9, 64, 143, 204
 Bishop Gobat School 161, 164,
 166, 174, 186, 192, 207, 208,
 209 *Pl. XIV*
 Bithynia 9
 'Bloody Sultan' 3 *See* Abdul
 Hamid II
 Bodourian, Karnig 60, 81
 Bodourian(s) 60, 81
 Bogharian, Norair (Fr.) 168
 Boghossian, Melkon (Agha) 184
 Boligian (Mrs.) 88
 Bolis (Constantinople) 32, 34,
 36–38, 48, 52, 62, 129, 142–143,
 151
 Bolshevik 152, 173, 190
 Boujikanian, Hagop *Pl. XVI*
 Bourmanian, Seropé 125
 Boyajian, Harutiun 142
 Bozajian 27
 Bozanti (Bosanti) xix, 62, 65, 69,
 71, 76–78, 80, 82–86, 88, 91, 204
 Britain 195, 208
 British
 Crown 183–184
 Girls' College 175, 186
 Hospital 172, 185
 Jewish Agency 183
 British Mandate xviii, xxiii, 162,
 181–182
 British Royal Commission 188

Brousa (Broussa, Bursa) 36, 55,
59, 62, 63, 65, 85
Bucharest 65, 185
Bulbulian, Karekin (Fr.) 170, 198
Bulgaria 50, 169, 172
Byzantium 10
Byzantine Empire 2

C

Cairo 140–141, 153–154, 162, 164,
168, 176, 177, 184, 208
Calouste Gulbenkian Library
xxi
Carmi
George xxii
Ivan vii, ix
Natasha vii, xxii
Nora Arsenian ix, xxii
Pls. XVI, XVII, XIX, XX
Caucasus xxvi, 1, 50, 219
Chalcedon 32
Chalekian(s) 48
Chalekian, Tavit (Fr.) 169, 198
Chankiri 49, 87
Charkejian 110
Chavouchian, Antranig (Dr.) 41
Chavoush, Stepan 143
Chekherdemian, Hovsep 142
Chekidian, Harutiun 27
Chemberly Quarter 37
Cherakian, S. (Dr.) 48
cherkez (Circassian) 53, 92, 118,
123
Chetchetian, Hovhaness 27
Chetchetian(s) 98
*chette (brigands, irregular fighting
bands)* 53, 83
chette-bashi Ibrahim (Tali) 53
Chifteha Haoush (Khan) 85, 204
Chopurian, Vahe 142

Christianity 1, 160, 190
Church Missionary Society
Hospital (C.M.S.) 154, 157, 159,
160, 161, 170, 186, 207–208
Cilicia (Little Armenia) xix,
xxvi, 2, 6, 85, 87, 91, 106, 129,
152–153, 184, 206
Civil War (Spain) 183
Committee of Union and
Progress (CUP) 3–4, 47,
50–51, 59, 116
Constantine 1, 10
Constantinople (Bolis) xix, 2,
10, 32–33, 34, 36–39, 48–49,
52–54, 57, 62, 66, 76, 79, 87, 91,
129, 142–143, 151

D

Dadourian, Krikor 65, 78
Dadourian(s) 48, 60, 66
Dakessian, Antranig (Dr.) ix, 67,
224
Damascus xx, 49, 62, 130, 132,
134–135, 142, 156, 191, 206 *Pl. IX*
Darakjian, Berge 189
Dardanelles 50, 142
Dashnakzoutiun/Tashnag (ARF)
49, 173
Dayan, Garabed 135
Dayan, Stepan (Kordonjian,
Simon) 143
Deir-el-Balah 166
Deirmenjian
Harutiun 143
Krikor 29, 37, 38
Yeghiazar 92
Deir Zor (Deir-el-Zor) xv, xix,
xxv, 5, 14–15, 51, 53, 59, 65–66,
79, 94, 106, 109, 117–119,
126–127, 199–201 *Pls. XIV, XX*

- Demirjian
 Aram (Dr.) 165
 M. (Dr.) 43
 Demirjian Pharmacy 37
 Deongel 53, 60
 Deraa 62, 130, 132, 206
 Derderian
 Yeghiazar (Deacon) 169, 198
 Yeghishe (Fr.) 198
 Der Hovhanessian, Krkor 81
 Dervishian, Dirair (Fr.) 179, 198
 Deuvletian, Antoun 35
 Diaspora xvii, 147, 157, 170, 180, 196
 Diocletian (Emperor) 10
 Dipsi 62, 113–122, 205
 Dischekenian, Ghazaros (Deacon) 198
 Dodd, William S. 59, 63, 75, 78, 83
- E** _____
 Edirne (Adrianople) 85, 142
 Egypt 142, 144, 151, 154–155, 160, 164, 167, 192, 193, 206–207 *Pl. XI*
 Ehmalian, Sarkis 81
 Ekmekji
 Jacques xi, xxiii, 9–11 *Pls. II, XX*
 Karma vii, ix *Pl. XX*
 El-Arish 139, 206
 Enezé (Arab Tribe) 126, 205
 Enver Pasha, Ismail 4, 51, 60, 66, 134
 Eregli xix, 15, 62, 66, 69, 71, 73, 75–82, 84, 128, 204
 Erzeroum 9
 Eskishehir 53, 62–64, 204
 Etmekjian, Hrant 36, 37, 39, 151
 Europe 3, 5–6, 50, 57, 152, 222–223
 Ezadjian, Roupen 127 *Pl. V*
 Euphrates xix, 62, 109–110, 113, 117, 120–121, 124, 199, 205 *Pl. XII*
- F** _____
 Faisal II, King of Iraq 193, 209
- G** _____
 Gagarian, Sahag 152, 154, 164 *Pl. XVI*
 Garabedian, Vahan 142
 Gaza xviii, xx, xxiv, xxvi, 29, 139, 148, 150–195, 197–198, 206–209 *Pl. XI*
 Geddes, Walter M. 83, 94, 97, 123
 Gedig Pacha 38
gendarmes 11, 53, 57, 59, 69, 71, 73, 77, 79–84, 88, 98–99, 101–102, 111, 113–115, 117–120, 124, 126, 131, 134
 Genocide xviii, xxiii–xxv, xxvi, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13–14, 16, 51, 59, 67, 79, 155
 Genocide Museum xv, 200, 201 *Pl. XXIV*
 George V of England 179, 208
 George VI of England 183, 208
 Gerjikian, Garabed (Deacon) 198
 Germany 4, 50, 55, 123, 184, 189, 195
 Geyve 54, 142, 204
 Ghazarian
 Ghazarian, Boghos 162
 Hagop (Agha) 48, 119
 Hapet 27, 113
 Zakar (Agha) 113
 Ghazarian(s) 93, 98, 105, 110, 117
 Ghazi, King of Iraq 193–194, 209

- Ghosein
 Ferida 192
 Lydia 192
 Giavour Dagħ (Mt. Amanus) 94, 205
giavour (infidel) 52
 Giuleg 60, 81, 85, 87, 89, 91, 205
 Goenjian, Antranig (Effendi) 156
 Golden Horn 9
 Golgotha xxiii, 66, 91, 93–94, 129, 159, 201
 Golgotha Chapel xxi
 Gosdanian, Vera ix
 Goshdoyan, Haroutiun 27
 Goshdoyan(s) 48
 Greek Orthodox 185–186
 Greeks 2, 4, 13, 42, 168, 170, 179, 201
 Greek Army 153
 Greek Government 157
 Gregorian Calendar 25, 55, 141, 190
 Gulemerian
 Krikor 178
 Simon 14, 130, 165, 169, 172, 178 *Pl. X*
 Guleserian, Papken (Catholicos) 184
 Guyrjian, Hovhanes 27
- H** _____
 Habur 62, 124, 199 *Pl. XXI*
 Hadidian
 Artoun (Fr.) 190, 198
 Harutiun (Deacon) 175, 198
 Hadjen xxvi, 124, 142
 Hadjentsi Avedis (Impostor) 124, 125
 Hagopian
 Hamazasp N. 143
 Nishan 143
 Hague 152
 Haidostian, Paul (Rev.) ix
 Haifa 62, 156, 169, 171–172, 174–179, 182, 184, 189, 190, 208
 Haigazian University ix, 127, 166, 199
 Hamidian Massacres 3
 Hampartsoumian, Yeghishe 185
 Hanna, Yousef (Journalist) 162
 Harami, Nicola xxi, 195, 209
 Hargreaves, Alfred R. (Dr.) 161, 186, 207
 Haroutounian, Arsen (Fr.) 42, 48, 60, 76, 79, 81–82, 84, 87, 95, 98, 102, 110, 113–114, 117–118, 122, 204
 Harutunian
 Haigazoun 42
 Krikor 28, 29, 30, 203
 Hassan Beyli 93, 205
 Haydar Bey, Ali 128, 205
 Haydar Pasha Port 32, 34
 Hejaz 148, 182
 Hekimian, Haigaz 143
 Helwan 151, 154
 Herod 159
 Heron, G.W. (Colonel) 178
 Hitler, Adolf 6, 189, 209
 Holocaust 3, 50, 59, 200
 Holy Sepulchre Church xxi, 159
 Pl. VII
 Hovagimian, Stepanos (Prelate of Izmit) 53, 79, 81, 87, 125
 Hreshdakian (Hershdakian), Vahan (Dr.) 98
 Husseini, Hajj Amin (Mufti) 188
- I** _____
Iashe Memuri (Ration ditributor) 87, 95

- Ignatiadis, Dimitri (Dr.) 170
 Incirlik (Injirli) 86, 91
 Intilly (Intilli) 56, 94
 Iran 1
 Iscudari (Scutari) 34, 142
 Islahiye (Ishahie) 62, 91, 93–95,
 97, 205
 Ismailiya 139, 152, 206
 Israelian
 Giuregh 161–162, 165, 168, 198,
 207
 Penyamin 142
 Istanbul 2, 4–5, 9–10, 12, 14–15,
 32–36, 38–40, 49, 54, 169, 203
 Istanbul University 33, 40, 203
 Faculty of Medicine 33, 203
 Medical University 36
 Pharmacy Department 33
Ittihadı 3, 50, 59, 116
 See Committee of Union and
 Progress
 Izmit (Ismit, Ismid, Izmid,
 Ismidt) xviii, xix, xxv, 9–12,
 14–15, 33, 36, 43, 47, 48–50,
 52–61, 58, 62, 63, 69, 78–79, 85,
 87, 106, 109, 125, 129, 135–136,
 141–143, 150, 155, 196, 201–204
 Pl. I, XXIV
 Izmitsi 10, 13, 76, 79, 81, 84,
 92, 109, 126
- J** _____
 Jackson, Jesse B. (American
 Consul in Aleppo) 109, 113
 Jaffa 62, 132, 148, 158, 170–172,
 180, 182, 190
Jamanak Newspaper 66
 Jamavayr 10
 Jansezian, Kevork (Fr.) 198
 Jelial Bey (Governor of Konia) 79
- Jemal Pasha, Ahmed 4
 Jerahian, Ardashes 41, 47, 203
 Jermagian, Joseph 143
 Jerusalem xix–xxiii, 14–15, 29,
 62, 98, 127–133, 140–141, 148,
 149, 151–152, 155–161, 164–175,
 178–179, 182–185, 189–190,
 192–196, 198, 201, 205–209,
 219 *Pls. VI, XIV–XVII, XIX*
 Jerusalem Girls' College 174, 175,
 178, 182
 Jewish State 188
 Jews xviii, xx, 2, 4, 42, 50, 102,
 162, 180, 181
 John the Baptist 159
 Jordan/Trans-Jordan xxii, 15, 131,
 160, 182, 196, 209
 Julian Calendar 25, 55, 141, 165,
 168, 206
- K** _____
 Kabadayan, (Dr.) 48
 Kabshilmalian, Kevork 143
 KadiBayir/Karabakh xxvi, 13
 Kadikeuy 32–33, 142–143
 Kafafian, Hovhannes 155, 207
Kaïmakam (District Governor)
 77, 107, 128
 Kaiser, Hilmar ix, 11, 59, 63–64,
 79, 97, 123, 221
 Kalenian, Yedvart 143
 Kalesdian, Apel 142
 Kalousdian, Shnork (Fr.) 198
 Kambourian, Onnig 135
 Kamil, Commissar 37
 Kanle-Gechid 91, 93
 Kantara xvi, 139, 206
 Kapo 9, 10–12, 14, 16
 Karajian, Nigoghos 143
 Karakashian, Markar 143

Karaman 66–67, 69–76, 204
 Kassakhian
 Ardashes vii
 Arsiné Arsenian xxiii, 150, 155,
 161, 164, 166–167, 172, 174,
 178, 182, 186–187, 190, 192,
 206–209 *Pls. XVI, XVII*
 Garabet (Dr.) ix
 Harutiun vii
 Isgouhi ix *Pl. XVI, XVII, XIX*
 Vazken vii
 Katamon 157
 Katma xix, 62, 98–103, 105, 205
 Kayseri 62, 143
 Kazanjian, Hovhannes 67
 Kemalist Forces 16
 Kemal, Mustapha (Atatürk) 6,
 15, 62, 153
 Kerkiasharian, Kevork 142
 Kerovelian, Nerses (Fr.) 185, 198
 Keshishian
 Aram Kh. 143
 Khatcher (Dr.) 149, 175
 Kévorkian, Raymond H. ix, xvii,
 xx
 Khabayan, Sahag (Catholicos)
 xix, 129, 184, 205
 Khachadourian, Onnig 109
 Khacherian, Zareh 27
 Khairallah, Shereen (Dr.) ix
 Kharpert (Harput, Kharput)
 xxvi, 57, 143
 Khatcherian, Krikor 141–142
 Kirkuk 62, 175
 Kochian, Zareh 124
 Kolian, Zareh 43
 Kondayan, G. 47
 Konia (Konya) 47, 52, 59, 62,
 63–67, 69, 73, 75, 79, 83, 204
 Koushagian, Torkom (Patriarch)
 167, 185, 187, 208, 209

Kouyoumjian, Shavarsh (Fr.) 198
 Krikorian, Hovsep 175
 Kum Kapu 33, 34, 35, 38
 Kurdian, Onnig 33, 88, 129, 203
 Kutnerian
 Anoushavan 36, 164
 Kevork 88, 110
 Kurds 4, 64

L _____
 League of Nations 157, 188, 189
 Lebanon 6, 127, 178, 191, 201,
 209 *Pl. XIII*
Lousavoritch, Sourp Krikor
Church (St. Gregory the
Illuminator) 14, 17
 Loutoufian, Zareh (Dr.) 85, 204
 Lydda (Lod) 139, 158, 182, 207

M _____
 Mamigonian, Vartan (St. Vartan)
 2
 Mamilla Road xxi, 15, 194, 196,
 209 *Pl. XV*
 Mamura (Mamure) 62, 91–95,
 205
 Manougian
 Khacho 194
 Sion (Fr.) 198
 Manoushag (Village) 10
 Marash 62, 126, 143
 Mardirossian
 Hrant 106, 205
 Simon (Deacon) 198
 Markarian, Roupen 142
 Marmara (Sea) 10, 12–13, 34,
 135 *Pl. I*
 Marqade 199 *Pl. XXII*
 Mas'oudiye 132, 206

Mavromikhali 171, 195
 Mazlounian, Garabed (Fr.) 135
mejidia (Ottoman coin) 25, 93, 99
 Mekhalian
 Garabed 76
 Krikor 28, 172, 175, 180,
 184–185, 208
Menzili Mufattesh (Local
 inspector) 130
 Merdin 25
 Merguerian, Merguer 156, 158, 195
 Merjan Khan 37
 Meskene xv, xix, 53, 62, 109–110,
 113, 122–130, 165, 200, 205
 Mesrob Mashtots 2
 Meymarian, Khachadour 143
 Middle East 2, 4–5, 117, 154, 167,
 220
millet system 2
 Minassian, Hrant (Deacon) 170,
 198
 Momjian, Harutiun 143
 Morgenthau, Henry 5, 49, 60,
 63–65, 75, 78, 83, 223
 Moskofian, Onnig 143
 Mother of God Cathedral
 (*Astvadzadzin*) 13
 Mount Ararat 7
 Mouradbekian, Khoren
 (Catholicos) 170, 190, 208
 Muslim 3, 51, 67, 92, 159–160,
 184–185, 216
 Muslim Brotherhood 160, 207
 Mustafa Kemal 6, 153
 See Atatürk

N

Nablus 132, 148, 158–159, 169,
 206–207
 Nairi (Land) 1

Najarian, Nazaret 143
 Narlekhian 85
 Nativity Church (Bethlehem)
 149, 150 *Pl. X*
 Nazareth 171, 184
 Nicomedia (Nigometia,
 Nikometa) xxi, xxv, 9–10, 12,
 17, 25, 30, 49, 53, 196, 221 *Pl.*
 XXIV
 Noubar Pasha 43, 140, 166, 207
 Nuremberg 7

O

Osmaniye (Osmanié) xix, 86,
 91–93, 205
 Ottoman 3–4, 12, 25, 47, 50
 Empire 2, 2–6, 9, 13, 15, 25,
 33, 42, 47, 49, 59, 71, 149,
 203, 217–218
 Government 11, 49
 Turks 2
 Ovajik (Yuvajik) xviii, xxi, xxiv–
 xxv, 9–10, 16–17, 19, 25, 27–31,
 36–37, 41–42, 53–54, 59, 61,
 77, 93, 95, 109, 117, 143, 175,
 196, 203–204 *Pls. II, IV*

P

paklayalum (Cleansing) 52
 Palestine xviii, xx, xxiii–xxiv, 1,
 132–133, 135, 139, 147–148, 148,
 150–152, 158, 162, 168, 171–172,
 175, 178, 180–184, 186–190,
 193, 196, 206–209 *Pls. VIII, X*
 Pangalti 35, 142
 Panossian, Hamazasp 142
 Papazian
 Mihran 27–28, 117
 Sarkis 143

Yervant 92
 Zaven 142
 Pareshanian, Nazaret 189
 Paris xvii, xx, xxii, xxv, 2, 9,
 14–15, 21, 52–53, 149, 218–219,
 221–223
 Parseghian, M. 43
 Pederian, Krikor 142
 Peel Commission 183, 209
 Peltekian, Katia ix
 Pera (Beyoğlu) 35
 Pericles 201
 Pigeon, (Dr.) 159, 207
 Portoyan, Krikor 175, 176, 177
 Port Said 133, 152, 154
Prgitch (Savior) xxi, 160
 Prisoners of War (WWI) 138,
 140–142, 144, 206
 Protestant 72, 78, 82, 91, 124,
 161, 162, 167
Puragn (Weekly paper) 43

Q _____
 Qalqilya 182
 Quweisna 140, 206

R _____
 Rafah 139, 148, 206
 Ramleh 148, 155, 158, 176, 180,
 207
 Ras-el-Ain (Ras el Ain) 62, 98,
 138, 148, 206
 Red Cross 133, 149
 Rodenko, (Dr.) 160
 Rodosto 85
 Roshun Keopru 142
 Rushen Bey 130
 Russia 4, 50–51, 62, 92, 152, 160,
 184

S _____
 Safad 148, 191
 Sahagian, Aghavni 176 *Pl. XIII*
 Samakh 135, 171
 Samaritans 159
 Samatia 33, 34
 Sanjak (Province, Caza) 9, 47
 Sarkissian
 Aghasi (Deacon) 142, 198
 Harutian 198
 Krikor 142
 Sarrafian, Roupen 142
 Sassanid Empire 2
 Schäfer, Paula (Sister) 93–94
 Sebastia 9, 159
sefer berlik (military
 mobilization) 47–48
 Seferian, Levon 142
 Selian, Sarkis 29
 Seljuk 2
 Senâlikli, Nazim Bey 4, 47
 Seolios 143
 Seropian
 Hagop A. 67, 224
 Krikor Minas 125
 Minas 125
 Vagharshag (Deacon) 9
 Vramshabuh 130
 Sevan (Lake) 1
 Sevkerian, K. 43
Sevkiyet (Deportation) 86, 95,
 99, 107, 110, 114, 117, 118, 119,
 123, 128, 130
Sevkiyet memuri (Deportation
 officer) 86, 107
 Shakir, Behaeddine (Dr.) 4
Sharif Hussein of Mecca 200
 Appendix II
 Shifa Amr 184
 Shirinian xxiv, 224
 Shirinian, Kevork 43

Shishli 142
Sick Man of Europe 3
 See Turkey
 Silifke 143
 Silo 25
 Sirounian, Mampre 168
 Sivrihisar 81
 Smyrna (Izmir) 59, 97, 153, 206,
 220
 Sodom and Gomorrah 116
 Soukyassian, Bedros 142
 Soureniantz, Kevork V
 (Catholics) 166, 170
 Soviet Union 6, 170, 190
 See Russia
 Stanos 143
 St. Archangels Church (Sourp
 Hreshdagabed) 14, 16, 53, 162,
 165
 Stepanian, Stepan 43
 Sterling, (Dr.) 159, 160
 St. James Convent xx–xxi, 129,
 140, 165, 184, 188, 193 *Pl. VI*
 Suez Canal xx, 139, 206
 Syria 5–6, 63, 113, 123, 130, 157,
 167, 199, 200

T _____
 Tahmizian, Karnig 143
 Takvorian(s) 48
 Tala'at Pasha (Talaat), Mehmed
 4, 51, 54, 66
 Tanta 151, 154
Tarkmanchatz School 164,
 166–167, 174, 207–208
 Tarsus 76–77, 79, 83–85, 87–88,
 98, 205
 Tatarian, Setrag 143
 Taurus (Mountains) xxvi, 81, 84,
 85, 86, 91, 92

Tavoukdjian, Serpouhi 16
 Tel Aviv 148, 180
 Terzian, Noubar (Deacon) 198
*Teshkilâ-ti Mahsusa (CUP
 Special Organization)* 49, 53,
 219 *See* Committee of Union
 and Progress (CUP)
 Tigran II 1
 Tinchukian, Garabed 198
 Tokatlian, Maksoud (Dr.) 48
 Topalajian, Harutun 142
 Topalian, Dikran 171
 Torossian, Nerses (Fr.) 180
 Toumayan, Papken (Deacon) 198
 Tourian
 Ghevont (Archbishop) 173,
 208
 Yeghishe (Patriarch) 164, 165,
 167, 198, 207
 Treaty of Lausanne 153
 Treaty of Sèvres 5, 149, 153–154,
 206
 Tripoli (Lebanon) 62, 128, 205
 Tulkarem 135–138, 206
 Turkey xxi, xxiii, xxv, 1, 3–4,
 6–7, 9, 12, 49, 50, 57, 75, 81,
 84, 97, 149, 204, 225
 Modern Turkey 1
 Turkish Government 6, 47,
 48, 55, 71, 217
 Turkish railway 10, 11, 59, 63,
 69, 70

U _____
 Upper Bekaa 195
 Urartu (Kingdom of Ararat) 1
 Urfa 62, 143, 155, 207
 Urmia (Lake) xxvi, 1

V _____

Van *xxvi*, 51
 Lake 1, 62
 Varjabedian, Arsen (Fr.) 29
 Varnajian, Bedros (Agha) 82,
 114, 205
 Vartanian National School 17,
 27, 29, 31, 203
 Veshir Khan 64, 204
vesika (affidavit, permit) 76, 78,
 98, 128, 130
via dolorosa *xxiii*, 66, 85
 Voskeritchian, Armenag
 (Deacon) 179, 198
 Vrtanesian, Barkev (Fr.) 198

Zakarian
 Levon 128, 205
 Onnig 37
 Stepan (Agha) 60, 71
 Zakar (Village) 10
 Zion (Mount) 161, 174, 186
 Zoroastrian 2

W _____

Wadi Sarar 132
 Waheed, Munir Afram (Dr.) 159,
 160, 169–171, 175
 Wallis, H.E. 85
 World War I 3–5, 49, 59, 149, 219
 World War II 6, 189, 195

Y _____

Yemen 182, 193
 Yeni Kapu 34, 36, 62, 143
 Yeretsian, Ashod (Deacon) 190,
 198
 Yerevan 156, 200
 Yessayan, Aram 142
 Young Turks (CUP) xix, 3–4, 42
 Yozgat 62, 142
 Yotnakhparian, Leon 185

Z _____

Zagazeg 140, 206
 Zahle (Lebanon) 62, 156, 176

Design, picture restoration and printing

CHIRAK PRINTING - PUBLISHING | Beirut, Lebanon